





# PROWLING ABOUT PANAMA

BY  
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ILLUSTRATED BY  
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**DEDICATED**  
**TO THE**  
**YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUES**  
**OF THE**  
**CALIFORNIA CONFERENCE**



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## FOREWORD

THE fine art of prowling may be achieved, but is more often a gift of those to the manner born. Professional globe-trotters are not prowlers. They are often the victims of their own sense of superiority. Personally conducted tours are little help to real prowling, and professional guides reduce the sight-seer to a machine for receiving "canned" information with gaping mouth, while with his free hand he extracts tips from his reluctant pocket.

Prowling is an instinct, a sixth sense of locations and values. The prowler must have intuition and imagination and perseverance and historical perspective, but with these he must have something else—that inner vision that finds values in everything human. The expert explorer will find something interesting in Sahara, but almost any prowler will have a rare time in Panama.

Probably no spot in the New World has served as the location of so many kinds of events and interests as this narrow neck of land between two continents. Brief histories of it have been well written, and the visitor should by all means read at least one of them. It remains for some seer yet to tell worthily the story of the four centuries

that link the last discovery of the world's greatest explorer with the final achievement of the world's most skillful builders.

Panama furnishes an epitome of history. Nearly everything that has ever happened anywhere in the world has had some counterpart or parallel in Panama, and of the coming results of the new forces now released on the Isthmus time alone can be the measure.

This book makes no claims to consistency. Where contradictory characteristics abound and motives are much mixed, both sides may be faithfully set forth, but to reconcile them is a difficult matter. There will be no unified and consistent life on the Isthmus until the advancing civilization now there outgrows some of its present traits.

Can one tell the truth about Panama and return to the Isthmus? That remains to be proven. Much depends on the spirit of the prowler. As well ask whether one can tell the truth about Chicago and be welcome to that metropolis. Probably Chicago would pay no attention to the comment, but Panama might take enough interest to notice.

This is not a guidebook. Heaven forbid! It is merely a few notes of a prowler who found Panama interesting.

## CHAPTER I

### WHERE THE PROWLING IS GOOD

PANAMA is the great American curiosity shop. The first city founded by explorers in the New World, the oldest town in America inhabited by white men, the most conglomerate mixture of humanity on earth are in Panama. The bloodiest tale of modern history, the most romantic story of American exploration, the greatest engineering achievement of man all center in Panama.

If there be any interest in congested and sweltering humanity, any concern for the problems of social uplift and personal reaction, Panama is the laboratory for study. The cleanest and healthiest towns on earth are on the Canal Zone, and the last word in shiftlessness and inefficiency is also here. Superstition and science, rascality and rhapsody, efficiency and squalor, graft and honor, all mixed and mingled—this is Panama. Jungle and plain, valley and coast, tropic heat and mountain paradise, fever-swamps and ideal sanitation, engineering success and life in the primitive open—these too are in Panama.

Strange and mysterious traces are still found of the days when the gold of Peru was carried across the Isthmus on pack trains. Later the

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gold-seekers of California fought their way along the route of the present Canal and found ships on the west coast for the mines of Eldorado. If any survivors still live, they can tell stirring tales



THE FAITHFUL MULE IS THE SHIP OF THE JUNGLE

of the days when it was well worth a life to carry gold to Aspinwall.

It all began with Columbus himself when he sailed into Almirante Bay and thought that he had found in Chiriqui Lagoon the long-sought passage to India. What he really found, what was to follow his discovery, he could not have dreamed, adventurer that he was! Almirante

(Admiral), Cristobal (Christopher), and Colon (Columbus) remain to-day to remind us of the illustrious explorer who first set foot on Panama. But Columbus gave us Panama, and never knew! It was Balboa who first saw the waters of the wide Pacific from the summits of the Isthmian hills. It was Pizarro who packed across the fifty miles of jungle the timbers of the ships which he put together on the beach of the Pacific and with which he discovered Peru, after indescribable hardships and repeated attempts to find the "hill of gold."

On the Pacific side of the Isthmus was founded Old Panama, the first city of the New World, where to-day majestic ruins stand, a fitting shrine for the reverent pilgrim. And between Old Panama and Porto Bello stretches the famous Paved Trail of Las Cruces.

Along this trail lurked the trouble-hunters and makers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For two hundred years the tinkle of the bells of the gold-laden pack mules was never



THE HOMEWARD WAY AT NIGHTFALL

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silent. On this jungle path, when stolen gold was carried by the sackful, trouble was certain to follow. The big trail was a pathway of blood, robbery, and intrigue. All the worst passions and performances of depraved men turned loose and ran riot for a century and a half. These were the days when life was raw and rough at Panama.

To-day the old trail is covered with palms and decorated with orchids. Occasional stones trace the outline of the ancient highway. Where the drunken and ribald song of the muleteer rose about the camp-fire at night, canaries and parakeets now chatter and sing. The soft caress of the jungle breeze whispers no tales of the days when the trail could be traced by the bleaching bones that lined the right-of-way. The jungle is nature's great blotter for the sins, sorrows, and sufferings of an age now forgotten—but it all happened in Panama.

Panama is not all jungle. To the westward stretch great savannas, between the mountains and the sea; miles and miles of smooth and level country open, fair and well watered, only waiting for the tickle of American cultivation to laugh a crop. It makes a real estate man's fingers itch; but that is another story. Where a little cultivation has been inadvertently perpetrated on the land, tall sugar cane, luscious fruits, and toothsome vegetables attest the quality of the soil and the climate.

## WHERE PROWLING IS GOOD 17

Frequent rivers, numerous inlets on the coast line, occasional interesting native towns, old churches, impossible "roads," meandering trails, scattered herds of fat cattle, a few sugar mills, numerous trapiches (cane grinders), fenced patreros (pastures), and everywhere the mixed-blood natives—this is Panama in the western provinces.

Panama westward is not all a flat country, however. Eleven thousand feet into the sky rises the Chiriqui volcano, and a little farther west in the same range stands Pico Blanco (White Top), at about the same height. Thrown across the slopes of these lofty summits and half way up lies a great and beautiful country, with a climate such as might have been coveted for the site of Eden. Cool, comfortable, and salubrious is this garden of the gods. In all the so-called temperate zone no land yet discovered offers three hundred and fifty days per year of comfort and health. To be sure, vacation pilgrims from the warmer coast country sometimes make mention of cold feet upon first reaching this Mecca in the mountains, but nobody finds fault on that account. Most of them like it.

Chiriqui is a garden spot. Wide ranges of fertile soil, gentle slopes rolling back against the mountain ranges, good harbors along the coast, and occasional plantations with American improvements, mark the country as the coming

## 18 PROWLING ABOUT PANAMA

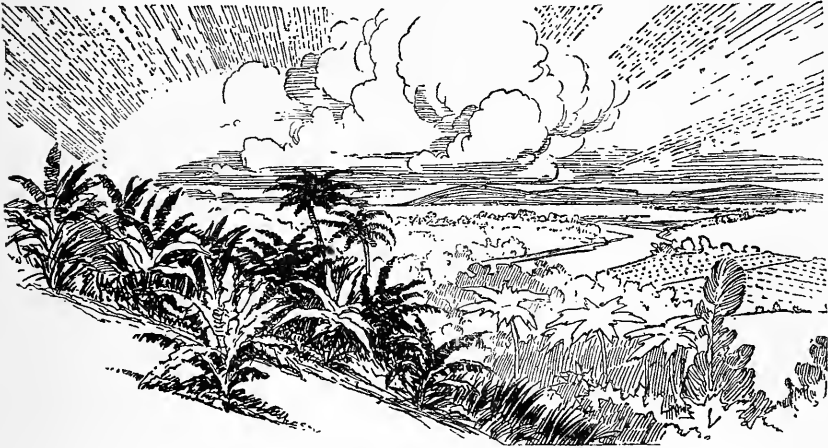
granary of the Republic. Rolling slopes and blossoming fields, with a background of the never-failing come-and-go of the lights and shades on the face of the mountains, form a picture not to be forgotten. Always the summits and the clouds seem to be playing leapfrog in the sky, and the whole upper world, looking down on the puny traveler, seems ever trying to say something and never quite uttering its meaning. And he who looks and listens finds himself trying to say it for them, and never can he find the word. Perhaps some poetic soul will yet look upon these heights and tell us what it is they are muttering.

The coast line of western Panama is a fascinating shore. Like enchanted islands rise bits of forest out of the sea and any of them might be the castle site of the lord of the main.

In and out between their wooded shores the steamer winds its way till it dodges in through some narrow "boca" to find a tortuous channel leading to a landing place, that must always be approached at the whim of the tide. Whether there be a thousand islands or not, no one knows; but I have stood on the steamer deck and counted fifty in sight at a time, while other fifties rose up to meet us as those nearby dropped astern. Here and there some lonely light blinks its vigil through the night, and the swells of the Pacific break in fantastic sea-ghosts against the rocky cliffs.

## WHERE PROWLING IS GOOD 19

Navigation of these waters is not a science, it is an art. The captains of these coast craft know every tree and rock and river mouth for four hundred miles, and make their way through tortuous channels by markings that no landsman can see. There is one grizzled navigator, said to be unable to read or write, who knows every marking on the coast for six hundred miles, and



AN EMPIRE IN THE MAKING

in the long years of service has never made a mistake or met with an accident. Possibly his success might be due to the fact that what he does not know does not confuse him. His mental horizon may not be very distant, but at least he escapes a lot of worry about things that he (and you and I) cannot control. When the tides have a rise and fall of eighteen feet, and all harbors are but shallow river mouths, the negotiation of the coast

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ports becomes a matter requiring much accuracy of judgment.

The old trail across the Isthmus is the Mecca of many pilgrims who by some searching find its scattered stones amid the riotous jungle. The later trail was opened after the city of Panama was moved to its present site. It began at Colon, followed the Chagres River to the present site of Gamboa, and then wound its ways over the low summit of the hills down to the new Panama and terminated at the "Nun's Beach," where now stand a Protestant church and school. Here the pack trains were unloaded and the high tides carried the rafts and lighters out to the ships waiting in the little harbor.

The dark days of Panama were the days after the gold trade failed. Even the gold of Peru was not inexhaustible, and the trade across the Isthmus could not stand continued centuries of robbery and murder. It had to end some time, and end it did; and when the end came all the Isthmus lapsed into a slough of despond and lethargy of inertia. For a century and a half Panama was as forgotten as the Catacombs.

But Panama went her way, whether anybody cared or not. The people left on the Isthmus were the racial remnants of the mixture of mankind that had found its way back and forth for two centuries, and they were fairly able to take care of themselves. The rich forests and fertile

## WHERE PROWLING IS GOOD 21

soil would bear fruit and food enough to sustain life whether anyone worked or not, and the result was not the development of a virile race of men. How could it be? Probably few spots on earth have had less incentive to develop hardy and enterprising character than the Isthmus of Panama.

The prowler about Panama will find a wide



A FEW GOOD ROADS ON THE ZONE

variety of interests and inspirations. Whatever his peculiar, personal fad he can find it somewhere. Then he can prowl to his heart's content.

If he prefers the sea, there are fifteen hundred miles of coast line to explore with something new to every mile. Or he can launch out a bit, and in a day's time make his way to the famous Pearl Islands, where are life and industry so distinct that weeks may be spent in studying the develop-

## 22 PROWLING ABOUT PANAMA

ment of a civilization, insular and unique. The coast of Darien has boundless possibilities for the explorer; and the San Blas Islands would keep the ethnologist busy for months. For an enchanted inland sea the Chiriqui Lagoon is unsurpassed.

If historical romance is desired, the prowling is certainly abundant; and if the prowler is a lover of nature, wild and luxuriant, rioting in marvelous and indescribable forms of overflowing life, he has but to equip himself for jungle travel, and he will find wonders by the mile, and fantastic nature piled mountains high and chasms deep. If it is mountains, they are here in scenic beauty unsurpassed. If the explorer is a student of human nature and cares to attempt the unscrambling of this blend of blood that flows in swarthy faces, he will be busy here for a lifetime. And if none of these will do, and the curious landsman will have nothing short of the exploring of vast unchristened wildernesses where no human foot has ever trod, and where strange and dangerous forms of unclassified life wander at will through the overgrown forests, he will find it—and doubtless he will find much more of it than he wants before he gets back to civilization.

If it is promotion schemes and development projects, then here at least is a commodious place to put them. Here, in agricultural and coloniz-

ing schemes, somebody will yet get rich—and other somebodies poor.

If the prowler's interest is primarily social, and he would browse about one of the most interesting cities in America, let him come to Panama. Ancient Spanish streets, scrupulously clean—can these be found anywhere else? Side by side, over and under, the sixteenth and twentieth centuries run together.

And what makes Panama to-day the crossroad of the world? For him who in the love of engineering skill holds communion with high human achievement, and prefers to prowl around the locks and docks, and study the marvelous successes and adaptations and devices of the latest and greatest feat of brain and hand, this is the very center of the earth. No man with a soul for the poetry of mechanics can stand in a control house of one of the locks and see the enormous gates swing back at the movement of a finger without feeling that man, with all his limitations, has yet in his being some image of the Creator. To see an ocean giant rise up slowly in the teeth of gravitation and slip through the gates on to the higher level, is to wonder whether the portals that look so gloomy to us may not, after all, be not exits but entrances to a new and higher level of life. What a text! The ship does not rise by straining but by resting in a narrow place. And no ship ever yet got through the locks without a

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pilot. The whole process is as silent as the forces of eternity. There is a lot more, and it bears no copyright. Help yourself.

And for the prowler in the region of philosophy, what a place! What changes in the geography and commerce and industry and policies and politics of mankind must follow this last



CHURCH AT NATA, OLDEST INHABITED TOWN IN THE NEW  
WORLD, FOUNDED 1520

achievement on the historical Isthmus of Panama, "quien sabe?" ("who knows?") None but the Omniscient. Trade routes and bank exchanges, commercial dealings and national programs will all be affected by this three-hundred-foot wide highway of water. If but some power the gift would give us to come back a century hence and see what will be doing then!

What social and moral transformations will be

wrought in the coming years by the release of spiritual forces through the new religious life and free faith brought to Panama with the coming of the Canal? Out of the soul-bondage of a system of superstition and ignorance will come a new human consciousness of the worthiness of life and the high privilege of living. Whether it is to prowl or prophesy, the material is abundant, and the pilgrim will find rare material a-plenty all about him. Panama is perplexing and peculiar, but he who finds the key to the riddle will be kept busy.

Perhaps the amateur explorer has a penchant for old churches. Here they are. Seven of them, with a couple of first-class ruins thrown in. The rich monasteries of Peru and Mexico are missing, but for that there is a reason. Every bit of treasure was stolen as fast as accumulated. Yes, if unmolested in the past, Panama would be a mine for the antiquarian to-day. But any active imagination, even on half-time shift, can find here material for romances, warranted to interest every member of the family, at reduced prices, if paid for in advance. From the Flat-Arch Church to the ruins of Old Panama it is good prowling all the way.

## CHAPTER II

### THE TRAIL OF THE PIRATES

THE present conglomerate of humanity living on the Isthmus of Panama is the racial remainder of some very much mixed social history. Here were enacted some of the most stirring stories and tempestuous times in American history. In 1453 the Eastern Roman Empire fell before the assaults of the Turks and closed the land routes to India. Nearly forty years later Columbus set sail in his great effort to find a westward passage for the commerce of Europe. In this he failed, but on his fourth and final voyage discovered the Isthmus of Panama and landed on the shores of the Chiriqui Lagoon, supposing that the beautiful inland sea must be the long-sought passage westward. Here the town of Almirante still bears his name. At Porto Bello and Saint Christopher Bay he made brief stops and returned to Spain having no idea of the character of the isthmus that he had discovered.

On November 3, 1903, exactly four hundred years from the day that Columbus set foot on the soil of Panama, the Republic of Panama declared its sovereign independence and began its national life as one of the family of American nations.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Caribbean main was overrun by as unscrupulous and bloodthirsty a set of pirates as ever sailed any sea. Even without these rascals there would have been trouble enough, and with them the story is sufficiently lurid for the most melodramatic taste.

One name stands out above his fellows. The intrepid navigator who first saw the waters of the Pacific set forth at the age of twenty-three as an adventurer, and after various experiences embarked as a stowaway for his second voyage. By personal persuasion he became the partner of his master, and after founding a colony in Darien sent Señor Endico back to Spain in irons for his pains.

This left Balboa supreme, with the whole



THE JUNGLE IS THE PLACE FOR  
PICNICS

## 28 PROWLING ABOUT PANAMA

Castilla de Oro (Castle of Gold) country before him for exploration. He at once sent Pizarro to examine the interior and gathered the scattered fugitives from former expeditions. The combined forces took the field against the Indians. When they reached the domain of Comagre, the most powerful chief of the country, peace was made. This chief was a real aristocrat with mummied ancestors clothed in gold and pearls, and he gave to Balboa four thousand ounces of gold, sixty wives, and offered to show him the way to a country beyond the dim mountains where a powerful people lived in magnificence and sailed ships of solid gold. He also entertained his distinguished visitor with tales of a temple of gold called Dabaibe, forty leagues farther than Darien, and said that the mother of the sun, moon, and stars lived there.

Balboa's imagination was stirred by these stories and he prepared an expedition of discovery. No temple of gold was found, but internal dissensions and Indian attacks disturbed the peace of the colony. Reenforcements arrived, and with them the title of captain-general.

Balboa now set out on what was to be the most famous event of his life. He had been promised the sight of a great ocean to the south, after he had climbed certain mountains. Various Indian oppositions developed, but on the 26th of September, 1513, at about ten o'clock in the morning,

Balboa and his men, from the top of a high mountain, saw for the first time the waters of the vast Pacific. The priest of the expedition, named Andreas de Vara, chanted a *Te Deum*, with the entire company on their knees. A cross was raised, and the names of the Spanish rulers carved on the surrounding trees.

After meeting several Indian tribes the descent was made to the shore, and Balboa waded knee deep into the surf and, waving the banner of Spain, proclaimed that the new-found ocean and all land bordering thereon should be the property of his sovereign.

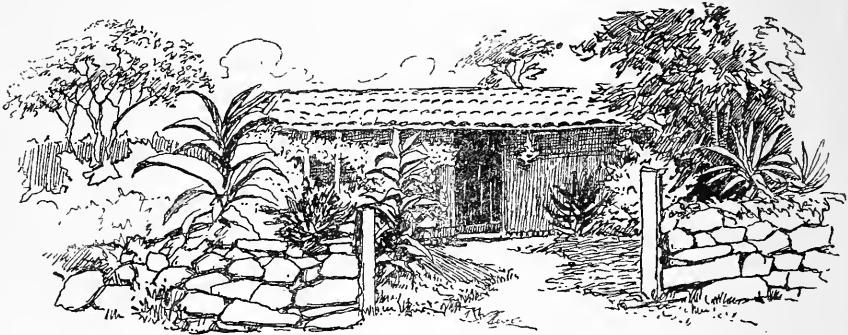
For a long time this new ocean was known as the South Sea, and Balboa at once set about exploring the vicinity. The Pearl Islands were located, taken possession of, and named. A later expedition by a less difficult route crossed the Isthmus of Panama and conquered the Indians on the Pearl Islands, bringing back plentiful tribute of fine pearls from the subdued chief.

The year following, in 1514, arrived the black villain of the story in the person of Pedrarias, sent out from Spain as governor of Darien. This disturber brought with him two thousand men. Balboa built a fleet of ships on the Atlantic side, took them to pieces, carried them on the backs of Indians across the Isthmus, put them together again, launched them in the waters of the Pacific, and proceeded to explore the coast eastward from

## 30 PROWLING ABOUT PANAMA

Panama. On his return from this trip Balboa was arrested by Pedrarias on a trumped-up charge of treason, and in the forty-second year of his life was beheaded, while declaring his entire innocency of all treachery. Balboa was a product of his age, and of faults he possessed a-plenty, but as one of the great explorers of history his end was a sad reward for the distinguished services that he rendered to the world.

In 1515 an expedition crossed the Isthmus and



EVEN FARM CABINS ARE PICTURESQUE IN COSTA RICA

camped near the hut of a poor fisherman at a point called by the natives Panama. For this name several explanations are given, one of them being that there were many shellfish at this place. The meaning of the name is now lost, but in 1519 the city of Panama was founded at this point by Pedrarias. Two years later, by order of the Spanish crown, the bishopric, government, and colonists of the Isthmus were transferred from the Atlantic side at Darien to Old Panama.

History now began in earnest by the Pacific. In 1525 a priest celebrated in the cathedral at Old Panama solemn mass with two other men, Pizarro and Almagro, the rite being a solemn vow to conquer all countries lying to the south. For this purpose an expedition was soon organized and sailed away along the west coast of South America. This expedition met with varying fortunes, but in time discovered the long-sought Peru with its splendid temples and golden treasures.

The first regular trail across the Isthmus led from Nombre de Dios to Old Panama, crossing the Chagres River at Cruces. Later small boats sailed from Nombre de Dios to the mouth of the Chagres and made their way up to Cruces, where their cargoes were transferred to the backs of horses for the rest of the journey to Panama. Later Nombre de Dios was abandoned for Porto Bello, because of the very good harbor at the latter place. The old trail was "paved" with stones for a part of the way, and the relics of this old road may still be found in a few places amid the tangled growths of the jungle.

With the conquest of Peru and the discovery of gold in Darien, Old Panama came rapidly to its own and soon became a city of great importance, being for the time the richest city in New Spain. All the gold of Peru and the rich west coast was brought to Panama to be sorted

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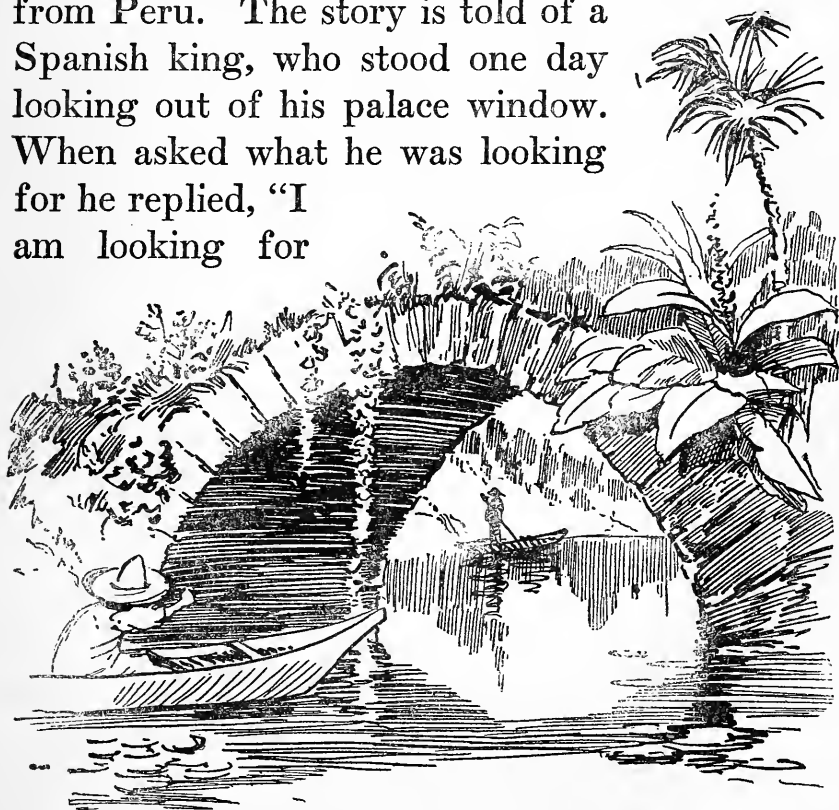
and packed across the Isthmus, thence to be sent to Spain. Porto Bello became a rich town and maintained great annual fairs up to the time of its destruction by Morgan's pirates.

The century and a half between the establishment of Old Panama as the chief city of the Isthmus and its destruction in 1671 supplied one of the tempestuous periods of history. It was on the Isthmus of Panama that the American slave trade began and was continued for three hundred years. The native Indians were so destroyed by the brutality and greed of the Spanish conquerors that the expedient of importing black men from Africa was devised in order to secure a labor supply for the country. Here arises the historical precedent for the use of West Indian labor in the digging of the American Canal.

The best account of the sacking and destruction of Old Panama is that written by John Esquemeling and published seven years after the event, of which he was an eyewitness, being a member of the pirates' band. The detailed account of this event, with the general pillaging of the Isthmus by the English buccaneers, has been narrated with much exactness and great interest.

Stories of the great wealth of Old Panama in the day of its glory are not hard to find. With the complete destruction of all this magnificence, the present city was founded with due ceremonies in 1673 and much stone was transported from the

old city and built into the new. The cathedral was soon built and stands to-day as solid as when first erected. The queen of Spain sent detailed instructions for the building of the city, and among other things directed that a safe wall for defense should be provided. This was so well done that some of it still stands, an interesting relic of the vigor and thoroughness of the civilization that produced it. Many years passed in building these walls, and they were said to have cost ten millions of dollars, most of which came from Peru. The story is told of a Spanish king, who stood one day looking out of his palace window. When asked what he was looking for he replied, "I am looking for



RUINS OF OLD PANAMA, THE MOST ROMANTIC SPOT IN  
THE NEW WORLD

## 34 PROWLING ABOUT PANAMA

those costly walls of Panama; they should be visible even from here." A little knowledge of the business methods of those days may throw some light on the whys and wherefores of the high cost of the old walls.

Twenty-six years after the founding of the present city of Panama an effort was made to establish an English colony in Darien, but fever and discouragement aided the Spanish in ending the venture.

The eighteenth century is a monotonous one in Panama annals, marked mainly by frequent encounters between the Spaniards and the Indians. Several piratical expeditions ended in the scattering and murdering of the pirates and restoration of Spanish sovereignty.

When the great movement in South America for political independence swept as far north as Colombia, and the decisive battle of Boyaca was fought in 1819, Panama was very strongly held by Spain as a place of maintenance for her armies, and the city was at all times in a good state of defense. In this same year, however, the first junta was formed for the purpose of bringing about independence from Spain, and sentiment in favor of the revolution grew very rapidly. Early in 1821 General Murgeon arrived with the promise of high reward if he could compose the difficulties in Panama and save the Isthmus to Spain. This he saw to be impossible, and after

having appointed José de Fabrega as coloner, he left for Quito. Fabrega, being Isthmian born, cast his lot with the revolutionists and on November 28th, 1821, a large and enthusiastic crowd assembled with representatives from all military and ecclesiastical organizations, and Panama was declared to be forever free from Spanish dominion. A few loyal troops, seeing their helpless position, laid down their arms, and the change of government was effected without the shedding of a drop of blood—something new in Panamanian affairs. Simon Bolivar sent over help for the independents, but found the work done before his men arrived.

After this political upheaval Panama slept on, and would still be dormant to-day but for the discovery of gold in California in 1849. With a six months' overland journey between the gold-hungry men of the Eastern States and the gold-filled mountains of the West, the Isthmus suddenly came into prominence as an easier way of reaching California. For seven or eight years after the finding of gold not less than forty millions of dollars of gold, twelve millions in silver, and twenty-five thousand passengers were transported across the Isthmus annually. In 1853 the high-water mark was reached, when sixty-six millions of dollars of gold were carried across to the Atlantic side and shipped to New York.

This sudden development of the pack train

business brought to the Isthmus a horde of Chil-



INDIAN WOMAN AT THE FOUNTAIN

eans, Peruvians, Indians, and mixed breeds, among whom were the inevitable plunderers and spoilers. The trail was again marked by blood and treachery. Many an unhappy pilgrim lost his riches, and not a few lost their lives on the way. At last the authorities were aroused to the necessity of making safe this highway suddenly become so important to the world.

The year of the first gold rush saw the organization of the Panama Railroad Company. In 1846 three American business men organized under the present name and secured a concession from New Granada for

forty-nine years with such conditions that no ship canal could be constructed across the Isthmus without the consent of the railroad company. When the name of New Granada was changed to that of Colombia, the time was extended to ninety-nine years. This concession in time came to be very valuable, and the French Canal Company found it necessary to buy out the Panama Railroad in order to secure control of the exclusive right of way across the Isthmus. Later, when the United States acquired the control of the French possessions in Panama, the Panama Railroad became one of the most valuable assets on the list. By conditions of the concession, this road was bound to pay to Colombia the sum of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars per year. After various transfers and deals this still holds in the form of the obligation of the Panama Canal to pay this sum annually to the Republic of Panama.

The story of the early construction days of the Panama Railroad are as exciting as those of the Morgan Pirates, with a far better outcome. Labor troubles were many and bitter, and it became necessary to hold men in jail until they were willing to work. The attractions of the California gold fields were too much for the cupidity of men who saw daily pack trains loaded with gold from the Eldorado of the Northwest passing their wretched hovels and taunting them with

## 38 PROWLING ABOUT PANAMA

visions of easy riches. But the work proceeded, and after interminable troubles with the black swamp between Aspinwall (Colon) and Gatun, the road was finished as far as Gatun in the year 1850. In 1855 the line was finished to Panama and the romantic career of the most prosperous short railroad in the world was well under way.

Charges for freight and passenger travel were enormous in the early days of the road. The fare was fifty cents per mile, with all baggage extra. Freight was carried across the Isthmus for twenty-five cents per pound, but so terrible were the old pack-train conditions that the travelers of that day were more than willing to pay such prices for the luxury of crossing the Isthmus by the railroad.

At last the Colombian government took up the matter and the passenger rate was reduced. Ten cents per pound continued to be the freight charge for years. The road made vast profits, and by a combination of rates with the steamship companies maintained a monopoly of travel. A few years after the completion of the railroad the pack-train men and outlaws, deprived of their plunder by the road, became very active as brigands, and on one occasion perpetrated a riot that cost sixteen Americans their lives and brought the United States and Colombia to the verge of open rupture.

As far back as 1515 a German named Schoner

drew a map of the American continents with a clear line for a canal through the Isthmus. In 1581 an actual survey was made for a canal, but nothing was done about it. In 1620 Diego de Mercado submitted a long report to Philip II, but the monarch turned it down, saying that since God had joined the continents together, it would be impious to try to separate them, and a death penalty was decreed for anyone so rash as to try to undo the works of God in this way. In 1827 an engineer was sent by Simon Bolivar, president of the New Granada federation, and a report was made commending the project of a combined rail and water route. In 1838 a French company aroused so much enthusiasm in the canal project that an expert was sent by the French government to look the ground over. He reported that a sea-level canal could be dug without going deeper than thirty-seven feet, but the idea was again abandoned. Two American investigations were made in 1866 and 1875, and about this time much interest was aroused in the then new Nicaragua project.

The popularity of the Suez Canal, successfully completed in 1869, led directly to the DeLesseps organization of the Panama Canal Company. Agitation began in 1875 and in the year following a right of way was secured, but with the Panama Railroad concession standing in the way.

The story of the work of the French Company,

## 40 PROWLING ABOUT PANAMA

the New Canal Company, and the final completion of the work by the United States government, is told elsewhere.

Now that the trail of the sixteenth-century pirates has become the most famous inland waterway of the world, we can read with complacency the story of the wretched times during which the Isthmus was the scene of constant strife. Verily, Panama was not a very good place for sightseeing in those days. The prowlers of the infested jungles and blood-stained trails were not such as we would select as traveling companions to-day. If any modern prowler becomes despondent and is tempted to complain that the former days were better than these, let him read the story of Old Panama, and then consider conditions as they are on the Isthmus and the Zone to-day, and he will find food for reflection.

## CHAPTER III

### PICTURESQUE PANAMA

A PANAMANIAN cart loaded with English tea biscuit, drawn by an old American army mule, driven by a Hindoo wearing a turban, drove up in front of a Chinese shop. The Jamaican clerk, aided by the San Blas errand boy, came out to supervise the unloading. The mule wriggled about out of position, a Spanish policeman came along and everybody got out and "cussed" the mule.

That is Panama, every day. Across the street is an Italian lace shop run by a Jew. Next door is a printery, operated by a Costa Rican. Just beyond is a French laundry conducted by a man from Switzerland, and on the next corner is a beautiful Chinese store where they sell everything from Japan. Cloisonné and lacquer and curious carvings, silks, embroideries, scientific instruments—they are all here. You can buy Canton linen, Hongkong brass, Nikko carvings, Hindoo embroidery, German cutlery, French microscopes, Canadian flour, New York apples, and California grapes all within a block. And the products of Central and South America are all about.

## 42 PROWLING ABOUT PANAMA

The street in front of the shops is full of Panamanians, Peruvians, Ecuadorians, Chileans, Colombians, and San Blas Indians, besides some representatives of every country of North and South America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. Canal Zone Americans walk past Yankee business men, and native police crowd the mestizos off the sidewalk.

Panama is a jitney town, and the honk of the never-silent horn punctuates the clang and dash of the trolleys and automobiles down a fifteen-foot street in a mad race to see which can get through first. Overhanging roofs nearly touch above blooming orchids and talking birds that scream across the narrow streets. Gloomy interiors and stumbling stairways lead up to spacious apartments and breezy balconies. Above are occasional roof-gardens. All the rooms have high ceilings, all the streets are paved, and all the kids wear clothes—sometimes.

There is no possible human shade or tint that is absent here. The Anglo-Saxons are white, more or less. The Jamaicans are black, mostly. The Panamanian is most often a soft and pleasing brown, done in a number of wholly unmatchable tints. And the natives from these many sunny countries round about are of every known color-tone, from chrome yellow to Paris green. This is the human kaleidoscope of the earth: shake it up and you will get a different result every time.

You may not like it, but you can never truthfully say that Panama is not interesting—all the time.

The streets are clean. Daily sweepers and nightly garbage men take care of that. The sidewalks are narrow, of course. Perhaps these two-foot sidewalks account in part for the innate courtesy of the Latin mind. One must be either polite or profane when he makes his way along these little ledges, often two or three feet above the street. A portable stepladder would help some.

Some of these houses are old, very old. A few are new; most of them have stood here one or two hundred



BATHS—WHOLESALE AND RETAIL

years. There are many three stories high, a few boast of four stories, but the most of them have but two. Third stories are popular because of the breezes that blow and make life comfortable.

Plazas are small, but parked and well kept, and they are used as only Latin-Americans know how to use a plaza. The little ones are garden-spot oases in the deserts of bare walls and wide

## 44 PROWLING ABOUT PANAMA

eaves. Santa Ana Plaza is the heart of the city, and there is no hour of the day or night that there are not people there. If you really wish to see the world go by, sit on the stone bench at Santa Ana Plaza and look about you. If you stay long enough, you may see anybody, from the latest naked brown baby to the last chosen president of any country you may name.

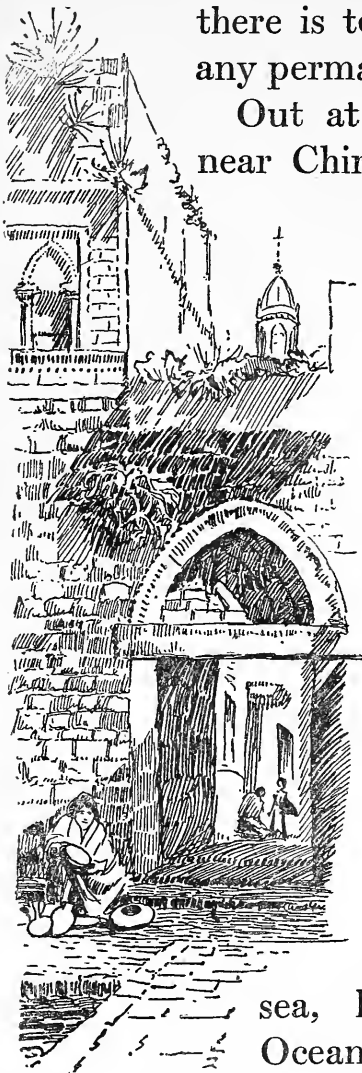
Sitting in the plaza is a business by itself in this country. The North American uses a park as a short cut, cross-corners, to get somewhere. But with the tropic citizen, the plaza is an end in itself. He is not going anywhere, he is just sitting in the plaza. He may not even be called a bench-warmer—the bench is already warm. He is sitting in the plaza—that is all.

The band-night parade in Santa Ana Plaza is an institution. Around the central garden they saunter, to the swing of the very good music from the central pavilion. The outer walk is wide, and so is the parade. Clockwise walks the inner circle, three abreast, all young men. In the opposite direction saunter the young women, also in threes. 'Round and 'round they go, talking, laughing, listening, looking, lingering, while the band plays on. It is a good band too. And not the least of the exhibit is the clothes the women wear. In matter of graceful and apparently comfortable costumes the Panamanian girls need apologize to none of their northern sisters. Who is to blame

the boys if they keep on walking around for the sake of seeing the seeable, especially when she may be quite worth watching? Every added turn means one look more. It is all very dignified and proper, but human nature is the same old composition in every land, and the blood in the heart runs red, no matter what the tint or tan without. In a land where the customs of chaperonage are exceeding strict, and no young woman is supposed to be left alone with any young man for the briefest moment, it is easy to see why the band nights in the plaza are popular. Ostensibly the young women, after the manner of their kind, have no interest in the young men, but just the same, their soft brown eyes have the same old way of wandering at the right moment; it is the same old trick and it works in the same old way.

The cathedral plaza is rather a different matter. Here gather the elite, in numbers on concert nights, and more or less on other fair evenings. The grown-ups sit about on the benches and the children run and play, care-free and comfortable. Well-dressed and content, these are the best of the old native stock that used to live "inside" the walls of Panama that the Spanish king thought he should be able to see. There are usually a few Americans with the crowd, and it is a peaceful and restful family scene. Were it not for the incessant clatter of

the trolleys and jitneys the place would be a good rest-cure. But as matters now stand, there is too much pandemonium for any permanent peace.



CONVENT DOOR

Out at the point of the seawall, near Chiriqui Prison, stands an old stone sentry box. It appears to belong to the prison now, but there was a time when the outlook from that point on the bay of Panama was the viewpoint of Panamanian life as it faced the Pacific and marked the place of departure for shores unknown. It is prosaic enough now to stand beside the little old stone tower and watch a big liner leave the canal and throw back its smoke-plume as it steams out to

sea, having left the Atlantic Ocean seven hours before. Gone with the days of the explorers and pirates are the mystery and menace of it all. The sentry box meant something then. Its lone occupant scanned anxiously the horizon for the sail that might mean fresh

plunders, news from the world beyond, bountiful booty or stolen treasure, or perchance a fight to the finish with other pirates as unscrupulous as the villains on shore. Now the children gather there at sunset to play, care-free on the high wall overlooking the Gulf of Panama.

Old Spanish houses are built with the yard inside. It is delightfully intimate and cozy, but not very democratic. Green and clean and cool are these little parked "interiors" of the better houses. Some of the common patios are dirty and disheveled, and the worst of them are better left alone, but the American Health Department looks after the sanitation of them all.

Chino (Chinese) shops sell everything, but, aside from the fine stores on Central Avenue, are mostly devoted to native trade. Out in the interior the Chinese storekeepers transact practically all the business of the country. Wherever there are two or three families gathered together, there the Chinese storekeeper is sure to appear, ready to harvest any small or large coins that may be in circulation.

There were at one time about five hundred saloons of all sorts in Panama. This number has been greatly reduced with hope of complete extinction, owing to the exigencies of the near-by American soldiers on the Canal Zone. The monthly payroll of the Zone is a stream of gold, and it is a case of losing that gold or cleaning up

## 48 PROWLING ABOUT PANAMA

Panama. Military orders and voluntary boycotts made Panama a lonesome town for the latter part of 1918.

There is the official lottery, suspiciously located. To be sure, the bishop does not person-



OFFICIAL LOTTERY IN BISHOP'S HOUSE, PANAMA

ally supervise the drawings, and perhaps he does not get anything out of it, but no one who knows Panama claims such to be the case. When did the hierarchy ever oppose a gambling game that promised profit for the cause? Gaunt, hungry-looking cripples and pobres hang about the corners selling lottery tickets. Evidently, none of the profits come to these unfortunates.

Panama City has its neighborhoods like any other Old-World town. "Inside" the old wall includes the original fortified town on the little peninsula jutting into the bay. Here live officials, professional and business men. Beyond this lies the town that overflowed the wall and now reaches down to the park in front of the Tivoli Hotel. This is the barrio of Santa Ana. Caledonia and Guachapali and San Miguel lie across the railway and serve to fill in the space between the Spanish town and the Exposition grounds. A mile and a half beyond the palaces of the exposition lies Bella Vista, beautiful for situation and rivaling Southern California for its real estate enterprise. Over toward the Canal is Chorilla between the Cemetery and Ancon Hill. At the end of the five-cent car fare on the line to the savanas is the famous—or infamous—bull ring. Who said that bullfights had been abandoned? Not much. Between bullfights and prize fights the season is not allowed to drag, and it must be admitted that the number of American patrons of these brutalizing contests is not to the credit of the kind.

The open market where the fishermen come ashore is one of the show places of Panama. Pangas and chingas and craft of every sort, except the modern kind, bring in on high tide cargoes of bananas, coconuts, charcoal, camotes, rice, sugar, syrup, rum, papayas, mangoes, lonzones,

## 50 PROWLING ABOUT PANAMA

chiotes, poultry, pigs, ivory nuts and a score of fruits and vegetables unnamable by the uninitiated. When the tide recedes the boats lie high, if not very dry, and the unloading proceeds apace. It is an interesting and lively scene, and the bicker and barter go on by the hour.

Hard by is the big native market, resort of housekeepers and servants in search of commissary bargains. This one is fairly clean and is the morning recreation of thousands of shoppers.

Panama has its theaters, of the sort to be expected. One of the movie houses compares well with the best anywhere, and most of the others are in good condition. The national theater is a credit to the country and forms a section of the national palace. On the Canal Zone the clubhouses, sometimes called Y. M. C. A.'s, put on several picture shows a week in commendable effort to supply recreation to their patrons.

The architecture of the old churches is a bit disappointing to travelers who have seen the splendid buildings of other Latin lands. The Cathedral has two modern towers, a clock in one of them, and the twelve apostles in life size on the façade. The Jesuit Church by the Malecon is very old and rather interesting. Recently a new concrete tower has been added, of striking appearance, but not closely in conformity with the architecture of the church. This church contains a famous old painting of purgatory and heaven,

and down below, the flames of the lost. It is notable that in the place of purgatory are bishops, priests, and kings. There are ten people in heaven, and ten in purgatory, and of each ten three are women. Query—Where did the painter think that the women belong? It is an interesting question, especially for the women.

The big Merced Church on Central Avenue has a curious and interesting little street chapel on the corner of the sidewalk, and here are arranged curious exhibitions at Christmas and Easter. I saw here the ancient village of Bethlehem, with the inn and manger and oxen; but there were also a miniature lake with a steamboat, and a grocery wagon delivering goods to the ancient Bethlehemites. The stores bore advertisements of patent breakfast foods.

No place can be truly romantic until it possesses some good ruins, and Panama claims distinction in the old Flat-Arch Church near the palace. The interior is now used as a garage, and no one but the tourist seems to think the place of any interest. Two blocks away stands the façade of the fine old stone church that has been a ruin now for years. The interior is now a stable, and the old walls of the college have been used for the construction of a modern cheap tenement house. The stone front of the old wall stands as a fine example of the architecture and building of 1751, when the church was finished.

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The San Filipi Neri Church, at the corner of Avenida B and Fourth Streets, is made from stone carried in from Old Panama. This church is said to have the most beautiful interior in the city, but, as it is very rarely opened to the street, the visitor will have to accept the statement without opportunity to judge for himself.

The savanas lie northeast of Panama and be-



RUIN OF FAMOUS FLAT-ARCH CHURCH

yond the ruins of Old Panama. The rolling slopes of green and the growing number of villas will make this strip of country valuable and famous before long.

Of Panama's hotels not much need to be said, except that they are good of their kind. Latin hotel standards are different from those of North America, but good judges of hotel life have pronounced those of Panama to be quite endurable.

There are always two or three daily papers in Panama and an indefinite number of weeklies. An immemorial custom exists by which when any citizen has anything on his mind that he feels he should unload to the profit or otherwise of the public, a printed pronunciamiento is issued and circulated about the streets by boys, handed out freely to everybody in sight. This really effective method is sometimes used for important matters of state.

The educational system is modeled upon the best Latin-American standards, with primary schools of four grades throughout the Republic. Provincial centers have schools with two, and in a few cases four years more. The Na-

tional Institute, at the foot of Ancon Hill, maintains a normal school for men and a liceo which grants the degree of Bachelor of Arts upon the completion of about the equivalent of the American college freshman



EIGHTH-GRADE ROOM, PANAMA

## 54 PROWLING ABOUT PANAMA

year. The young women are given a normal course in the Women's Normal School at the Exposition grounds. There is no coeducation above the primary grades. The Agricultural Experimental Farm and School, abandoned as an experiment station, is used as a reform school.

Taboga Island lies off shore and furnishes a point of much interest. It is the week-end Mecca of the Zone people and also of many of the Panamanians. There are a good American hotel, several fair native hotels, good fishing, tramping, an interesting native village, a healthful climate, and a fine view—and all within ten miles of Panama.

If the prowler is looking for real adventure, he can seek for it on Gocos Island, three hundred miles south of Panama. Here are said to lie hidden somewhere ten millions of dollars' worth of treasure, stolen from Callao and other points between 1820 and 1830. Harvey Montmorency wrote it up in a book entitled *On the Track of the Treasure*, and so well did he tell the story that four large expeditions have been organized and sent to find it. One man is said to have found a little gold for his pains, but the others went home poorer than they came. And if these are too easy destinations, there lie the Galapagos Islands off the coast of Peru, said to contain many possibilities, of many kinds. Peru is supposed to have the islands on the market, and anybody with the money can purchase one, all his own.

## CHAPTER IV

### A CITY OF GHOSTS

No one has ever satisfactorily explained the existence of ghosts in an enlightened world, but I have a theory that they survive because they render a real service. They lend interest to life and at least keep us from forgetting the super (or sub) natural.

Likewise ruins have high value as a link with the past, and with neither ruins nor ghosts life would become a very flat affair. And if ever a spot, by history, tradition, situation, and present condition, was marked for rendezvous purposes by all the tribe that gibber and squeak and wander at night in the dark of the moon, that place is Old Panama.

The history of Old Panama has been told, and well told, by other writers. Read it there, and read it before you see the place. Many pilgrims go out there, poke about among the ruins for a quarter of an hour, and exclaim, "Is this all?" Without the story the most appreciative pilgrim will miss the flavor of the place, but without a little romantic appreciation both the story and the ruins will fall short of revealing all that the place has to give.

The old town site was a hopeless jungle until the National Institute, under the leadership of Dr. Dexter, cleared away the brush and laid bare the traces of streets and buildings. To-day the place is in good condition and one may wander about at will and dream to his heart's content. It

is no place for joy rides, and the roadhouse is a blot on the place, but there are people still who see nothing but a refreshment counter and worthless stone heaps.

One of the favorite amusements of tourists and other people used to be that of digging for treasure at Old Panama. No one ever found anything of value, but it made a fine story to tell upon return to the States. "When I was digging for treasure in Old Panama"—just say it and see what a flavor it has.

It is most probable that if the ruins were located in a cooler climate, there would have been a great deal more digging. Under a tropic sun, however, it takes considerable bait to induce anyone to indulge in such vigorous exercise.



CONVENT GARDEN

The treasure idea is easy to locate. Peruvian gold was all brought up to Panama and stored in warehouses until it could be packed across to Porto Bello. There were endless fighting and plots and schemes and robberies and murders connected with the gold trade. Many a man lost his gold, and many a man his life. And, in consequence, some of the gold was also lost in the *mêlée*. What more natural, then, than to look about for this lost treasure in the place where most of it was stored?

Now, there may be millions of dollars' worth of old gold somewhere about Old Panama. The only difficulty is that no one ever yet has been able to find any of it. The probability is that no gold was ever left there long enough to be very much lost, and the men who did the fighting also took care of the gold. But that does not prevent any one from "digging for treasure in Old Panama" if he wants to do so.

Nevertheless, there is treasure in Old Panama, and it is to be had for the digging. But the digging will be, not amid the rocks, but into the history of the place. And the digger will find rare nuggets for his pains. Balboa, Pizarro, Pedrarias laid out this town, and set the pace for the wild and unprincipled years that followed. And Henry Morgan, adventurer, pirate, and general rascal, ended the story as it was begun—in crime and blood.

## 58 PROWLING ABOUT PANAMA

Accounts of the construction and character of the old city represent it to have been builded with much magnificence. All the woods used in build-



ROMANTIC OLD CONVENTS SURVIVE

ing were of the fine native mahoganies, and there were hangings, tapestries, and paintings in the sumptuous houses of the men who became enormously rich from the traffic of the times. Returning ships from Europe brought luxuries as well as necessities, and the gold trade people maintained regular fleets of ships and put Panama in close touch with the life of the age. There are described two large churches, a cathedral, a "hospital," over two thousand large houses, and several very large establishments for the care of the great number of pack animals used on the trail. Large quantities

of gold, silver, pearls, and gems of various sorts were in evidence. In the day of its glory Panama was a veritable Arabian Nights city, with some two hundred warehouses for the storing of stolen treasure.

The story of the destruction of the old city is one of shocking cruelty and lust, and merely furnishes the last chapter of the same tale of crime that marks the history of the Isthmus from the finding of the Peruvian gold to the days when the murderous pillages of rival pirates finally destroyed the commerce of the Isthmus and left Panama little more than a memory of former glories. The burning of Old Panama marks the turning point in Isthmian history and closes forever the days of conquest. About this time the vast supply of Peruvian gold became exhausted, and between the failure of loot and the destruction of trade by brigandage the Isthmus fell into neglect and was nearly lost sight of by the world for two hundred years.

Anyone who knows the story of the place will find the ruins fascinating because they show a construction of the days when men built strong walls because nothing else would stand the strain of the lives they lived. Some of the walls stand as firm and strong to-day as they did three and a half centuries ago, and unless removed by the hand of man they will stand here a thousand years hence. And when a wall stands for cen-

## 60 PROWLING ABOUT PANAMA

turies in this tropic climate of disintegration it is a wall to remember.

Most conspicuous stands the old church tower, splendid and defiant amid the wreckage about its feet. Straight and strong it lifts its lofty head above the treetops, and, viewed from any angle, is a majestic figure. There is no construction in modern Panama to-day that may be compared to the grand dignity of that sentinel tower. Like some old prophet, amid the ruins of a wayward people, the tower raises its head and stands in mute but noble witness to the reality of the things that endure. For the tower was honestly built, and therefore stands. Against its solid walls, builded from their rock foundation straight



RUINED TOWER AT OLD  
PANAMA

upward, the ravages of time have made but little impress.

The tower was part of the cathedral, and the cathedral was one of three or four great churches.

Of at least two others well-preserved ruins still remain, and are well worth careful study. The reddish-brown coloring of the old walls and the vine-covered stone help furnish endless temptations for the artist, but no one has yet given adequate expression to the splendid possibilities of these ruins.

Still more interesting vistas open to the mind's eye of the student with a constructive imagination. There were churches many and large and beautiful in Old Panama. And there were pirates wild and wicked and hated in Old Panama. Who "ran the town"? The pirates or the priests? What relations existed between the two? And if there were churches of such great beauty and strength, why were there also the terrible pirates? What were the churches doing that they did not bring about a better city?

These are hard questions, but to anyone who knows conditions to-day, and who knows that conditions to-day are better than they were in Old Panama, the answer is not far to seek. The hungry and helpless peons did not give the money to build those costly churches, though they doubtless did the hard work of construction. And if the pirates were good givers—and they doubtless were, under promise and threat—then they also influenced the general scheme of things in Old Panama. In short, the churches of Old Panama did not make a very good town of it.

## 62 PROWLING ABOUT PANAMA

What a story Jack London could have written here! It is too bad that he did not find Old



COSTA RICA TRAPICHE,  
OR SUGAR MILL

Panama before it was too late. Not only the ruins, but the vista of royal palms along the beach, with the little red-white-and-blue crabs scurrying about at high tide, unite to raise a sense of romance that starts the wheels of fancy revolving in one's brain. All one needs is a "long, low, rakish black craft in the offing,"—there it is now, the very thing, a big chinga, fifty feet long with four sails and twenty-five men on board, luffing and tacking about into the little bay just around the point. Pirates or fishermen—don't inquire too closely; either will do, and both are useful in romance.

In one of the churches are some old graves, where some natives have been buried, partly for convenience and perhaps partly from sentiment. Fine old walls stand earthquake-cracked, but still strong. Of roofs there are, of

course, none. And back of the church are still intact the foundations of a house said to have been the house of the governor, and the vaulted arches of the old cellar storehouse are still intact. A native lives in a shanty near by, and he greets the visitor, not with the information that might make him useful and get him a tip, but with the vacant optimism of those who feel that somehow something is coming to them whether they earn it or not.

As for the natives, none of them know anything about the place. The few that live there are of the sort that would camp under the nose of the sphinx and never look up into his face. But the reader of this can well spend a half day amid the most fruitful prowling anywhere in Panama. He may gaze at the splendid tower till the broken walls about it rise again, and the old tiled roof once more covers the worshiping congregations within, and the drone of mass and the fragrance of incense again ascend before the high altar. And down the old street, with its one-story houses, once more wind the pack trains and muleteers and men and women and children. There is excitement everywhere, and commotion and cursing, and everybody runs down to the beach. And if you will turn about and gaze out to sea, you will see there a curious craft with freakish sails, and when it drops anchor and the boat pulls ashore, you will see old Almagro himself step out

## 64 PROWLING ABOUT PANAMA

on the sands sword in hand, and with rough and profane commands, take charge of the unloading of his golden cargo. There will be wild times in Old Panama to-night, for the pack trains have returned from Porto Bello with a cargo of rum, and the sailors from Peru have been long at sea, detained by unfavorable winds, and, like sailors of other times and climes, they are thirsty. Out from the church door comes the tonsured priest; he shakes his head, shrugs his shoulders, and makes his way down to where the great Almagro stands, a commanding figure amid the confusion. For the commander has the gold, and, like all explorers of his time, he will be in need of a proper blessing by the priest; and the padre, being human, can use a little of the gold.

But while you gaze and dream, "dear reader," the vision fades and "the tumult and the shouting dies," and there stand the ruins, and there swings the sweep of the tropic sea, and you are again in the twentieth century, a little richer in mental imagery for your short excursion back into the sixteenth.

Which is to say that dreaming is easy at Old Panama. Try it yourself.

## CHAPTER V

### THE SPELL OF THE JUNGLE

WHAT the desert is to Arizona and the ice to Alaska the jungle is to tropical America. He who has never traveled through a tropical jungle on a trusty mule has missed something out of his life. He should go back and begin over again.

The jungle is much maligned and often misinterpreted. The jungle has a place in the agricultural life of the tropics, but it has also a place in the æsthetic and moral life of mankind. Here at last there is room, and the starved and stunted life may relax its struggle and strain and expand under the luxuriance and exuberance of a world where all the forces of life overflow and run riot in a thousand fantastic forms of energy and growth. Like the uncharted vastness of the polar sea and the unbounded, shimmering mirage of the wide desert, here at last there is plenty and to spare. When a man has stinted and economized all his life on a New England hillside amid stones and stumps, the jungle takes the load off his soul and sets him free in a universe of new and untested dimensions.

The jungle is misunderstood. There are jungles unworthy of the name, but these vast Pan-

amanian hothouses are a different matter. They are not the bottomless morasses of deadly snakes and poisonous vapors. Since men have learned how to live in the tropics these terrors have large-



PAPAYA TREES

ly retreated to the highly colored accounts of tropical travelers who took one look and fled—to write a book of timely warning to the uninitiated. These jungles are not the haunts of hidden horrors and poisoned arrows. Ferocious tree-dwellers may inhabit the unknown recesses of the upper Amazon, but they do not live in the jungles of Central America and Panama.

It takes just three conditions to make a good jungle, and these three are all present in this fascinating country. Moisture, temperature, and soil; mix them in the right proportions and you can produce a jungle at the North Pole, but nowhere can the mixture be located except in the tropics. When one remembers the painstaking toil expended on the rocky fields of northern New

York and then turns to a land where the problem is not to encourage but to prevent growth, one wonders how it happened that our ancestors blundered into an environment reeking with difficulties when they might have had all this overflow of abundance for the taking.

There are several brands of jungle, to be sure, and distinct differences of kind may be located easily. The jungle of the overflowed level river land is a very different formation from that which climbs over the rolling hills and up the mountain slopes. But everywhere there is the same reckless riot of power and life. Fantastic growths are here just because there is so much growing to do and so much energy back of the roots that there are not conventional forms of life enough to go around and life boils over in every conceivable absurdity of form and habit. This is no place for a niggard. But it is a splendid antidote for smallness of soul and for that dried-up-ness that settles down like a pall upon the spirits of men who never in their lives have had enough of anything or breathed an atmosphere of abundance.

It must be a petrified soul that can resist this wanton abandon of vegetable life. How a man can spend three days in this full-blown exhibition of vital energy at work in the vegetable world and ever be small again is more than can be readily understood.

Here is a world where no one ever need cry for

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more; there is too much already. After a few days of it one longs to get out in the open, to see a barren spot somewhere just to rest the surfeited soul a bit. It's all for the asking; in fact, there

is no chance to ask; it is poured out of the horn of nature's plenty, and all the color and charm and fantasy and music and laughter and glory of it are piled in wild profusion a hundred feet

high, and you cannot get away if you will. Nature at least has a chance to show what she can really do, and it is yours for the looking.

What makes up a jungle? Well, that's hard to say. There are mighty trees of cedar and mahogany and a hundred lesser breeds, lifting their heads into the tropic sky. There are palms and giant ferns

of course. There are wonderful purple and magenta and crimson-topped trees, whose glaring flat colors fairly shriek at you like the bedlam of a paint box let loose on the sky. Sturdy *lignum vitæ* trees stand conscious of their high value and



BANANAS AND SUGAR CANE

rare qualities. Ferns in profusion, vast, variegated and immense, line the banks of streams and hide in the shadows of the great trees. Orchids, of course, winding streams strewn with the flowers and foliage of the dense mass overhead, entrancing water streets and winding Venetian tunnels through forests so thick that the sun never penetrates the shadowed fastnesses below. There are paraqueets, parrots, singing canaries, alligators, bananas, bamboos, singing winds, warbling bluebirds, blackbirds that can render a tune, purples and blues and crimsons and browns, all poured out and mixed together without stint. It is fascinating for a few hours, but after a time you get overloaded and are ready to cry "Enough." It's great, but a little stupefying till one gets used to it.

The jungle of the mountains is essentially different from and more interesting than that of the level swamps. Both are largely uninhabited, for men naturally like to have a little outlook both for their lives and about their habitations.

But the growth is about equally dense, provided the soil and moisture are right for the production of real jungle. From Puerto Limon to Almirante is about one hundred and twenty miles overland, and there was a time when practically every mile of this distance was untouched jungle. The United Fruit Company has conquered most of it, until there is now but a day's journey on

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horseback through the connecting link between the two railroad terminal points at Estrella and the Talamanca Valley. The one hundred miles of rails run almost entirely through the endless fields of bananas. But once this was all primitive wilderness; that is, we think it was, but some of



CACAO PODS

the superintendents of this clearing and planting work say that they have discovered numerous evidences that there was a time in ages past when practically all of this vast area was under some sort of cultivation.

There would be a railroad now across the gap of twenty miles but for the fact that this gap includes a mountain range with rushing rivers and steep, gorges and almost impenetrable forests. Occasional travelers cross this range by the aid of sturdy mules, but there is yet nothing that could by any strain of language be called a trail. There is simply a "blaze" through the forest and occasional marks where some floundering traveler has preceded the venturesome explorer through the depths of some yawning mudhole.

I crossed this range on a day when the sun was

## THE SPELL OF THE JUNGLE 71

shining overhead, but only two or three times did its rays fall upon the "trail." The overhead growth was so thick that there was nothing but dense shadow below. A hundred and fifty feet these immense trees rose into the air, carrying upward with them festoons of hanging vines, swinging rattan, and clinging orchids. Curious enough are some of these trees, with their winding external buttresses and thin flanges thrown out to brace against the winds. Banyan trees reach out their long arms and drop their fingers down into the soil and take root and continue until the tree literally "stalks" its way across the mountain side. There are rubber trees and cedar trees and mahogany trees and prickly poisoned trees that are the terror of the natives, and trees bearing all manner of jungle fruits and flowers and swarming with chattering birds and creeping things. Rattan "ropes" an inch in diameter and two hundred feet long trip the unwary traveler, and it is useless to try to break them. They are like steel cables. Wild birds are plentiful, occasional baboons bark and bray, and the mountain streams splash and plunge their way through the ferns and flowers. The Estrella River forms the highway for several miles, and its rocky torrent must be forded a score of times.

He who has never tried to travel this "road" has a new experience in store. There are hill-

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sides that are all but perpendicular, which would not be so bad, but they are a mixture of clay and soapstone and moisture, and it is practically impossible to stand erect without holding on to nearby saplings. How a laden mule can navigate such a causeway of destruction is a mystery to be explained only by people who understand mules. And I rode a mule whose mastery of the art of trail-navigation left nothing to be learned. In the ignorance of my novitiate I alighted before the first precipitous descent to which we came. The mule, with the conservatism born of experience, took his time to make the descent, and I essayed to go before and show him how to do it. He watched me with intense interest, while I gingerly approached the edge of the slippery declivity and started down. As a descent it was a complete success. At the second step I slipped on the wet clay and went rolling and coasting to the bottom, whither I arrived in record time, plastered from head to foot with the raw material of which pottery is made. I struggled to my feet and looked up at the mule. He still regarded me intently, and I think that he winked, at least his ear did. Then he deliberately put his front feet over the edge, gathered in his hind feet, and with all fours together, sat down and gracefully slid to the bottom of the hill. He arrived right side up at the bottom, munching a mouthful of grass, which he seized in passing on

the way down, and turned to look at me with an expression that needed no interpreter. And I took the hint and stayed on his back most of the day.

After a solid day of this dense growth where we could not see more than a stone's throw at any time it was with a distinct sense of relief that we caught sight of daylight at last through an opening ahead and came upon the fringes of the Talamanca plantation.

The Talamanca Valley is something quite worth while in itself. Years ago it was inhabited by Spanish refugees who fled back from the bloody attacks of the ravenous Caribbean pirates of the sixteenth century. Their little plantations were not large and the land was not cleared very thoroughly, but they shifted their planting places until much of the present area was covered sooner or later with platanos. The view of this valley from the hillside is surpassingly beautiful. Thirty miles long, ten miles



PROPOSED LOCATION FOR  
REST CURE

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wide, and surrounded by mountains and forests, the whole floor of the valley is one vast, waving, level field of bananas, and there are few things better to look upon than a valley level full of banana tops. From twenty to forty feet high they stand, and their long, shady corridors are like the aisles of some great series of cathedral chapels, waiting for worshipers within. Through the middle of the valley runs the stream of the upper Sexola River with its three tributaries and their bluffs. The Changuanola Railway, which is the name under which the United Fruit Company moved its bananas and its men in this great plantation, runs the length of the valley, and the line of rails is punctuated by the white cabins of the black employees and the houses and offices of the plantation superintendents and foremen.

Dominating the whole valley stands old Pico Blanco, or White Top. There is no snow at the summit, but there is nearly always a white cloud cap there, hence the name. This noble mountain is the interest and admiration of all dwellers in the valley. Its top lists eleven thousand feet above the sea. It is not as high as Pike's Peak nor Shasta, but it towers well up toward the level of Fujiyama, and beside it Mount Washington looks like a pigmy and the Adirondacks are mere foothills. Back in the cañons and forests of the mountain range live the curious Talamanca Indians, whose tribal customs indicate a close affin-

ity between their ancestors and those of the famous Indians of Quirigua.

The difference between the jungle and the dividend-paying plantation is one of organization, capital, administration, and toil. Add these to the jungle and you have the plantation. Take them away from the plantation and in a very short time the jungle is again supreme. Crowding around the corners, peeping over the edges, and creeping ever onward, the jungle pushes its jealous way behind the footprints of the men who essay to conquer its wild ways. But once defeated, the jungle becomes a slave bearing costly burdens for its master—man.

## CHAPTER VI

### LIFE AT THE BOTTOM

"FORTY years ago I took a bath, and the next day I felt chilly, and then—"

"Never mind forty years ago. What is the matter this morning, and why have you come to me for medicine?" chants the seasoned employer of plantation labor.

"That is what I was telling you, señor. Forty years ago I took a bath, and the next day I felt chilly, and then I thought that I had made a mistake, and so I went—"

"Now, see here. I have no interest nor curiosity about forty years ago. What is the matter with you now?"

"Be patient, señor. This is important, and I will tell you all. Forty years ago—" and after devious dodgings the tale terminates in a case of fever or indigestion, or mayhap only plain drunk.

It is ever thus with the tropic tao, or peon, or ignorante, or whatever may be called the people who have grown up with the soil and have risen not any above it. The petty official who hears complaints in any tropic land listens to marvelous reminiscences through deep jungles of imaginative memory before reaching present facts.

"Twenty-five years ago I had the toothache, and then the next week I had a bad dream, and after that I had no suerte [luck] at all, until one saint's day I drank rum and ate rice, and the rice make me sick—" is merely the opening chapter.

Every employer of tropic labor must be judge and jury for a docket of petty cases that have to be adjusted if the wheels of industry are not to be paralyzed in their work. Newcomers at this business of sitting in the seat of judgment hear marvelous stories of oppression and outrage, in which the accuser is always innocent—and always alone, if possible. But experience breeds disillusionment and skepticism deep and wide, and soon the amateur Solomon learns to distrust every story, most of all the first one told. For, after the plaintiff has sworn that he is telling the truth, or may all the saints strike him dead, and has unrolled his woes in orderly sequence, he stands with critical eye, watching to see what impression his art has made upon the puzzled personage of power.

And when the adjuster of affairs scorns the tale and says, "Get out with you. I don't believe a word of that stuff," the beggar bows and smiles a deprecating smile and begins all over again with a revised version of the case, which bears very little resemblance to the first story, and again stands back to observe what better success

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he may hope for this time. And there appears to be no end to the ready versions and variations of the woes of the downtrodden exponent of virtue

whose humble bearing seems to exude virtue from every protruding bare spot through his rags.

"Last Wednesday morning, I got up, and—would you believe it?—there was nothing in the house. There was no yucca [counting off on his fingers], no plantanas, no huevos, no carne, no mais, no azucar, no arroz—absolutamente nada. Yes, it was last Wednesday—no, no, señor, I am a liar—it was last Tuesday morning. And, señor, my children were hungry, and I remembered that there was nothing—" and so on the story goes to its climax in the claim that a certain party, not present, owes the complainer fifty cents for



PICTURESQUE JUNGLE  
TOWNS

real or imaginary value bestowed, and will the owner please collect the fifty cents for the starving children?

And if this tale is unsatisfactory, comes im-

mediately a fresh version to the effect that it is another man who owes a dollar because he tramped across some young corn and spoiled the crop.

It is this fertility of imagination that makes up for any sort of accurate information. To the American the amazing thing about these people is that they know so little about their own very interesting country. The American must know in order to boom his town, but the tropic native has no idea of booming his town. There is no fun in booming, there is nothing to boom, and a boomed town would be always stirring about or starting something, and would be a nuisance anyway.

I stood in a village, quaint and curious, and wondered how old it might be. The bells hanging to a cross beam in front of the old church bore figures on their rims—1722, they said; and they looked it, every inch—or year.

Came the young curate of the parish, a good-looking and intelligent native, who talked a little with us pleasantly, and lured us into the old church, where he immediately improved the occasion by getting the collection basket and holding it under our noses. "It is a special saint's day," he explained.

"How many people live here?"

He could not tell.

"How old is the church?" we wanted to

know, thinking to get a morsel of information for our crumb of contribution.

He did not know. The question was entirely new to him. He had been born in the town, and later showed us with pride the house in which himself, his mother, and his grandmother had been born, but as to the number of inhabitants or the age of the church it had never occurred to him to inquire.

But presently inspiration came to his aid. There was an ancient woman still living at more than a hundred years; surely she would know the answer to some of these curious questions.

We called on the old woman. She was nothing but bones and parchment, sitting with her chin on her knees on a small platform of slats which she had not left for over two years. She claimed one hundred



TORTILLAS ARE STAPLE

and two years, which was undoubtedly correct, as baptismal records are usually accurately kept. She certainly looked the part. The stu-

dante sat down on the "bed," placed his hand kindly on the old woman's shoulder, and told her that though she was blind there were three strangers who had come to see her and congratulate her on her great age. She was pleased and said so, but her mind was as feeble as her body, and there was little that she could say. When asked as to the date of the "blessing" of the church, she said, "O yes, certainly I can name it—it was on Saint John's day."

"That's fine," enthused the curate. "Now, what year was it, grandma?"

"Ah, that is another matter. I can't tell you now, but if you will come to-morrow, I may be able to remember it then."

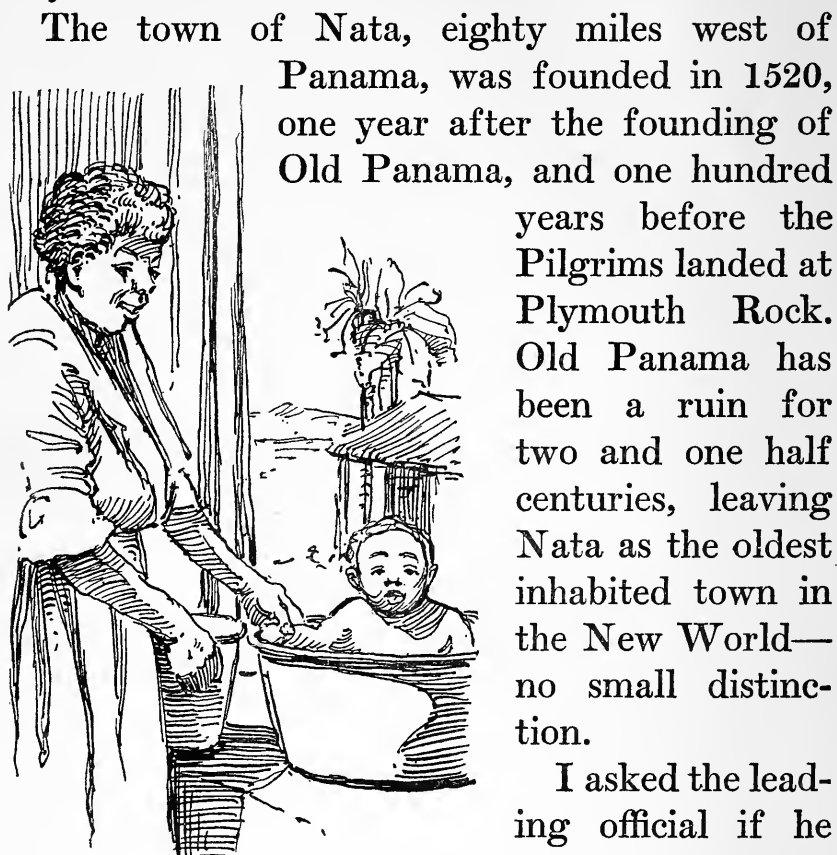
We left the next morning, of course, without the date of the dedication day, but what information was lacking on this point was amply made up in information concerning the population. We asked seven people the question and received seven different answers, ranging from three hundred to five thousand. We counted a hundred odd houses, indicating six or seven hundred people,



JUNGLE FOLK

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but no one there had any idea or any interest in the matter. What difference did it make anyway?



"THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT"

The town of Nata, eighty miles west of Panama, was founded in 1520, one year after the founding of Old Panama, and one hundred years before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock. Old Panama has been a ruin for two and one half centuries, leaving Nata as the oldest inhabited town in the New World—no small distinction.

I asked the leading official if he knew how old the town was, and he said that he understood that it was "very old." When I suggested that it was the oldest town in America he nodded politely and talked of something else. I called on the priest, an intelligent and friendly man, who also understood that the town "was very old," but its priority of claim to the oldest living municipal inhabitant of the

Americas had little interest for him. He talked on, complaining bitterly of the bad morals of the people and the small financial proceeds which the parish yielded its spiritual leader.

It is easy to disparage any people, especially if they speak a different language from your own. Most of the things said against the illiterate natives of any country are true, but the trouble is that they are only a small fraction of the truth.

A large employer of native labor, who took pride in treating his men well and paying them promptly, complained to me that he never could keep steady labor on his place for the reason that the men earned enough in one week to keep them drunk for the next fortnight, and hence worked only one week out of three, leaving their families to starve or shift for themselves as best they might. And he told the truth.

But he did not tell it all. This same employer distilled the rum on his own place and regarded it as a paying business. When other employers raised the price for labor and produce he refused to do so on the ground that the more they had the worse off they were. On the surface it might seem to be true.

But these same laborers, even saving all possible margin of wages, could not have lived in anything like comfort on sixty-five cents per day. Most of them never see a newspaper, and

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could scarcely read, and not at all understand it if they did see it. There is not an item of news, a trace of historical knowledge or perspective, a gleam of scientific understanding, a moving picture show, or a lecture on any subject, or a musical program, nor any one of the thousand things that add interest and widen the horizon of life—none of these things ever enter the remotest areas of his consciousness. He lives in the flat, narrow confines of a life so small, so cramped, so possessed by superstition and terror and ill will that he is not many removes from the cattle with which he works. When this man would celebrate his saint's day he gets drunk, organizes a bull fight, and gives vent to every low impulse of his nature.

Is it any wonder? The only tingle of interest that touches his soul comes from adventures in the realm of unfaithfulness and drunkenness. How many of the rest of us would do any better if born and bred in the mire of his social inheritance?

There is such a thing as moral hookworm. Saint Paul called it by another term, but its symptoms are unchanged. The unshod soul, shuffling through the mire of degradation, acquires from the lower stratum of his environment the infection of a spiritual destitution that lowers moral vitality to the minimum.

How comes this benumbed conscience and depraved practice? What is the matter that the

average of legitimacy for all Central America is thirty per cent of the total population, while the seventy per cent are born of unmarried parents?

It is not for lack of churches. Every town has its church, and the church is invariably the best building in the town. It stands on the plaza, commanding, central, and usually more or less beautiful. One can scarcely get out of sight of a church tower in any thickly settled, level country. And the churches are large enough to contain almost the whole population of the town, at least by taking them in several installments at mass hours.

It is not for want of priests. There are priests in every town, and most of them carry out pretty faithfully the routine of ecclesiastical observances that make up the day's program. Black gowns, tonsured heads, and beads and rosaries are seen everywhere, and the padre is usually the most influential man in the town.



CHURCH BELLS OF ARRAN-  
JAN, CAST 1722

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It is not for want of religion. Every house of any pretensions has its holy pictures, often its crucifix, and usually its rosary. Women in numbers attend mass and go to confession.

It is not for want of opportunity on the part of priests or church. It is not because of "church competition." Here we have a unity complete and final.

For three hundred and ninety-eight years the priests and their church have had sole, exclusive, and continuous occupation of Nata, the oldest town in America. I was probably the first Protestant missionary who ever walked the streets of the place. Here in the oldest town, with the longest occupation and the undisturbed opportunity, should be found a fair chance with these people.

And what has it done? The open-minded and friendly priest complained bitterly of the fact that in his parish only five per cent of his people were born of married parents. Ninety-five per cent were registered on his books as "Naturales." The year before he had administered over three hundred baptisms and had celebrated only three marriages. "I can't get them to marry," he groaned. "Practically speaking, almost no one is married."

Is Nata worse than other towns? Possibly so, but it must be remembered that the "church" has had a longer chance there than in any other city

in all America, and perhaps when the other towns have been exposed for the same length of time to the system, they will show equally advanced results!

There is this thing to be said about the characteristic attitude of the average priest toward his people: he always despises them. In many lands I have found this to be true. Discouraged by the failure of his system to produce spiritual life, or even good morals, he complains bitterly that the people are indifferent, careless, negligent, immoral, unfaithful, and, not least of vices, they are poor pay. If they are these things, no one knows it better than the man who hears their secret confessions. And that this man should come to a chronic attitude of distrust toward the products of his own spiritual husbandry is one of the severest indictments against the system that produces indifference on the part of the people and cynicism in the heart of the priest.

What was the church doing to remedy this situation with its deadly monotony, its superstition, ignorance, and unmorality?

The church was maintaining its round of formulas, saints' days, masses, confessions, baptisms, funerals for-what-the-traffic-would-bear. Showy processions and occasional celebrations were the circus and movie for the people. And on the confession of the troubled priest himself, there was no moral result. Out of the dead past stood a

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mummied memory of the once living church, and its mumbled incantations had no power to make the dry bones live.

The only power that seems able to stir new life in the old mausoleum is the advent of a vigorous Protestant work. In rage and bitterness the powers bestir themselves and begin to defame and persecute their disturbers, and in the end, they inevitably give some attention to reviving their own decaying program.

How can a man be well when he is one hundred dollars away from a doctor? With four doctors located among two hundred thousand people scattered over a radius of forty by a hundred miles, and all fees exorbitantly high, what is a poor man to do when illness overtakes his household? What is he to do? Why, nothing at all, except await the end, either of his illness or of both infirmity and himself. What the missionary needs is no less Bibles than castor oil and quinine and iodine. I think that I would begin with a moving-picture program and a clinic, and when a little physical health appeared, and some sort of interest began to loosen the rusty hinges before what occupies the mental space, I would begin to talk of something to make life worth living. It was the way of the Master to heal and teach and arouse, and the whole program of missionary work might be founded on "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more

abundantly." That is the key to the process. These people are not bad; they are crippled. They are not vicious; they are lifeless. They are not rebels: they are very much untaught, backward children.

The system of public schools is growing apace,



FIRST-GRADE ROOM, PANAMA

but it has a tremendous task, small support from the parents, and often open opposition from the priests. In one town a citizen remarked that on examination day at the close of the term not a single pupil came to school, but that it made no difference, as they were all promoted and would live just as long whether they were promoted or not. (How I would have enjoyed that, as a

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boy!) In another town the supervisor had criticized unfavorably the people for certain careless habits, whereupon the teachers took offense, all resigned and closed the schools. The secretary of education siding with the supervisor, all schools remained closed, and the children were happy.

There is one safety valve left for people in such lives, and that is the world-old prerogative of talk. In the long evenings, by the roadsides, on the street corners, over the balconies flows an endless stream of talk. Prattle and chatter and gossip and slander flow on and make up the only scenarios the people know. Most of it is harmless. Some of it is aimless, and all of it is fruitless of anything except to save the mind from utter blankness.

They were chattering away in the evening, three or four women seeming unconscious of me, a traveler stopping for the night. One subject held undivided attention for much time—What shall we cook for breakfast? And from that it was but a step to that eternal solace of feminine conversation—the shortcomings of men in general and husbands in particular. One of the animated declaimers arose, struck a dramatic attitude, and said, "To expect that any man should be of any use about the house is impossible," and the eloquent shrug of her shoulders underscored the remark. In vain I broke in and protested that in the United States it often happened that

the men were successfully commandeered and detailed to the work of kitchen police, but the only reply was an arched eyebrow and another shrug. "Tell that to the marines," was what she meant.

There are two measures of quantity. Either it is "No hay suficiente" ("There are not enough") or "Hay bastante, bastante" ("Plenty, plenty"). The population of the next town is one or the other of these measures. The distance to the river, the crops, the number of children in the family, the tale of the years that is told—it is all one thing or the other. And the standard, in contrast with the artificial measures of a high civilization, is at least true to life. Either there is enough or there is not enough—that is about as close a distinction as the day's experience affords. For that matter, all the rest of us are on one side or the other of the same cleaving line of necessity.

That everybody should blame everybody else for whatever may happen to be the matter is the most natural thing in the world. Whom shall we blame if not some one else?

It is the fault of the officials that the country is poor. It is the fault of the large landowner that there is no development. It is the fault of the municipalities that the towns are not better kept, it is because of the officials that justice is not better administered. It is the fault of the Canal Zone that the good days are gone forever,

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and it is the fault of the American government that there are certain restrictions on native tendencies to move forward by the backward jerks of revolution. A Costa Rican once said to me, "This war in Europe amounts to nothing; but if we could get up a good old-fashioned revolution, I would be on the job to-morrow."

The virtues of these people are a surprising list, considering their scant opportunities. They are kindly in dealing with foreigners who show themselves friendly. They do not as a rule abuse their children, which the West Indian is apt to do if he is of the baser sort. The native is hospitable and courteous and always willing to oblige, provided he knows what to say or do. To be sure, the inventory of his information is disappointing, even concerning such subjects as the distance to the next town and the market value of rice, but he will tell all he knows and share what rice he has. Traveling through the country alone, I have been shown every kindness and entertained with the best that was to be had, and often sent on my way without being allowed to pay for what I had received. "Do you think I would take money from a guest?" protested a hospitable host with whom I had spent the night and who had fed my horses, the guide, and myself, and had entertained us all evening with discussion of many matters.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE INTERIOR

WE had reached the town of Anton the day before, and I had sent the guide back with the horses and purposed to make my way alone. The morning was fresh and balmy, as befitted the dry season, even if a night spent on an antiquated cot in a room next to that occupied by a man with a racking cough and a rooster with a clarion voice, were not a perfect repose. The *rapport* between the fowl and the afflicted was complete: when one of them broke the silence, the other immediately took up the refrain. At breakfast I suggested to the good wife of the host that I had heard that if a board were placed above a rooster's head so that he could not stretch upward, he would not crow. She was all solicitude at once at the suggestion that the noisy cock had disturbed my slumbers, and I had to protest my indifference to such serenades.

Down the street I found a little store where the owner had a horse or two to hire upon occasion. Thirty minutes of bicker and I was astride a wiry little native pony to which a bridle was unknown, and out through the stately palms and luxurious bananas I made my way to the open

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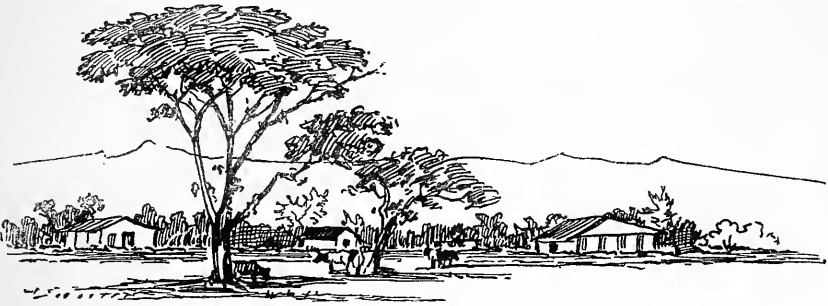
country eastward. The river was thronged with horses led to water, and women busy with their domestic laundry. It was quaint and picturesque. In some such manner might the ancient Egyptians have gone about their morning tasks. I have seen exactly the same procedure in the Philippines and by the rivers of southern China.

A mile or two from the town the trail mounted a rolling hillock and I pinched myself to remember that I was not in New Mexico. Straight ahead rolled the almost level llanos for miles until they were lost in the hills by Chame, and the purples and pinks of the six-thousand-foot summits were like a frame for a picture whose southern limits were in the glint of the blue summer sea. It was a picture and a promise. For two hours the nervous little pony followed the trail across the smooth plains and frequent streams. If ever a land was spread out as a challenge to the plow and seeder, here it was.

I sought a colonization site, where I had heard of a dozen plucky Americans who were undertaking a plantation on cooperative lines. At last I found it in the midst of as fine a tract of land as lies beneath the tropic skies. An old-fashioned farm dinner made life worth living after native "chow" for days. Modern tractors, plows, a ton of cotton seed, and other signs of enterprise did much to make the place seem like somewhere in the great Southwest. But the enterprising

Americans were harboring no delusions regarding the nature of their undertaking. They meant business and had counted the cost.

An American on the Canal Zone invested his savings in land in the interior, and during the vacation built a good wire fence. On his second visit the fence was totally destroyed by ax, fire, and wire-cutters. The owner appealed to the



THE BEAUTIFUL SAVANAS OF COSTA RICA

local alcalde, a brother of the provincial governor. He demanded redress for his wrongs. The judge heard his story, and then, striking a dramatic attitude, smote his breast, and exclaimed, "If these my friends had not done this thing, I should have done it myself." Which was to say, no foreigners need apply in those parts. It is probable that this outrage could not occur under present conditions.

"The Panama politician thinks that all the republic begins in Las Bovedas and ends in Las Semanas," remarked a plantation owner of the interior country.

## 96 PROWLING ABOUT PANAMA

Whether this is true or not, few people realize or know anything of the splendid country that lies back of the Canal Zone and out of reach of the flitting traveler. To the average Canal Zone employee all Panama begins at dock seven and ends in the Administration Building. And for the tourist who comes to do the Canal in a day, of course, everything begins with the Washington Hotel and ends with the Tivoli.

But Panama is something vastly more significant than a couple of slow-service, high-priced hotels. The Isthmian Republic is an empire in possibilities, entirely apart from the Canal Zone, though the development of the latent riches of the country is most vitally related to the Canal enterprise. And the rich belt of land that binds together two continents is something very much larger than the interesting little city that bears the name of Panama.

Back of the ten-mile strip controlled by the United States stretches a land abounding in natural resources which make it potentially a factor of agricultural and economic importance. To the uninformed citizen of the United States and other countries the Republic of Panama is a mere shoestring tying together the two continents, lest the pair become separated and one of them lost. We look at the Isthmus in contrast with the two vast continents that lie to the northwest and southeast, and the connecting

link appears small. Panama suffers from comparison with its big neighbors.

Compared with well-known and important insular holdings in the Caribbean group, Panama assumes entirely different proportions. Panama is two thirds as large as Cuba and has one third of Cuba's population. Panama is about the size of Portugal, is four times as large as Salvador, seven and one half times as large as Jamaica, and nine times the size of Porto Rico. Panama is as large as all New England except Maine, and nearly equals the combined area of New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and West Virginia.

There are interior areas of well-watered, rich soil that equal whole States in size and yet are entirely unknown to many residents of the Canal Zone. The Chiriqui Province has a coast line of one hundred and thirty-three miles and contains as much land as Delaware, Rhode Island, and Long Island combined. The rich agricultural region in the provinces of Coclé, Veraguas, Los Santos, and Herrera is as large as the State of Connecticut. The region east of Panama City reaching out to Chepo is as large as Rhode Island, and in the Darien country is an area almost unknown, but abounding in rich resources which would cover the map of New Jersey with a good margin.

It is supposed that no one lives in this large territory except the Americans on the Canal

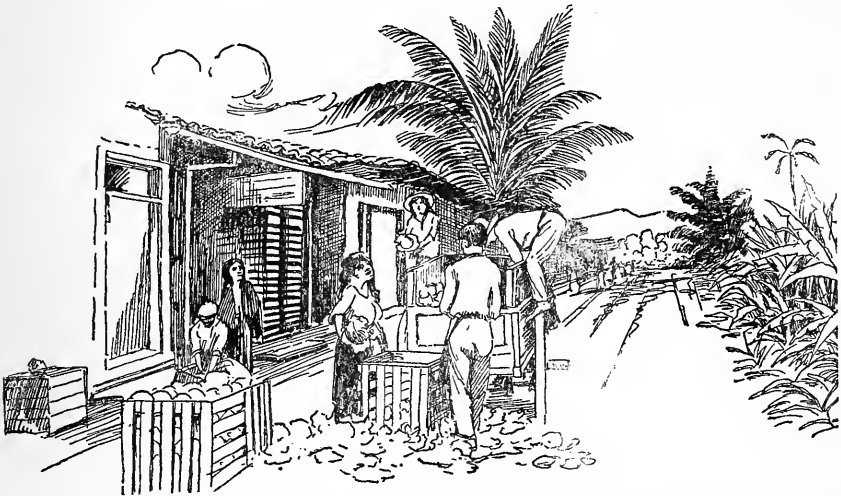
## 98 PROWLING ABOUT PANAMA

Zone and inhabitants of the two cities of Panama and Colon. This is also indicative of ignorance. The Republic of Panama has two thirds as many people as Paraguay or Jamaica, and, as previously stated, one third as many as Cuba, as many as Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho combined, or is about equal to Utah, Nevada, and Arizona put together.

On the basis of resources and soil and climate and accessibility to market, Panama can support a population many times her present numbers. Her capacity for supporting population from her own products is larger than that of most of the States of the Union, acre for acre. Panama's resources are as good as those of Jamaica or Porto Rico or Cuba. On the basis of Jamaican population there should be six and one half million people in Panama, and if the number of people per square mile were equal to that of precipitous Porto Rico, we would have a population in Panama of ten and one half million, which is more than live west of a north and south line drawn through Denver, Colorado.

That no such population lives to-day in Panama is due to political causes more than any other factor. The population of Porto Rico has nearly doubled since American occupation exchanged the old regime for the new. The barren deserts of the great Southwest are becoming fertile and populous regions because the people

who are possessing the land have a fair chance, and know that they will be assured a market for their produce and security for their lives and property. Given political security, monetary stability, market accessibility, and assurance of economic cooperation on the part of the government, there are no immediate limits to the population that Panama may support in comfort.



SHIPPING COSTA RICA VEGETABLES TO PANAMA

Political stability for the government of Panama is assured by the relations which exist between the United States and the Isthmian Republic, a condition which exists in no other Spanish-American republic. The proximity of the Canal assures a world market. The climate and soil and water supply nature has provided with lavish hand. Sanitation and hygiene have become exact sciences, and the matter of retaining

## 100 PROWLING ABOUT PANAMA

good health in the tropics is no longer a problem. There is still good land to be had on favorable terms, but the supply will soon be controlled by monopolists who are seizing the present opportunity to load up their future bank accounts, while war conditions produce a general depression of the world's development forces.

The present interior population includes three distinct classes of people. The original Indian stock still exists, pure and often wild, in the high mountains and remote regions of the country. These Indians are beginning to emerge from their fastnesses and get acquainted with their neighbors, now that they are sure of police protection when they come out. But their number is small and they are a negligible factor in the totals.

The West Indians are an importation, and while they are easily adapted to the climate and form the staple of labor supply for the Canal, they are not the Panamanians and never will be except as they mix with the native stock and shade off the colors that exist in such confusion. The Negroes and Panamanians are much more distinct in the interior than about the Zone with its terminal cities, where the remnants of humanity have been stirred together for four hundred years. West Indian populations exist in predominance only on the plantations of the United Fruit Company, where they supply the

labor for the operation of these vast enterprises.

The Panamanian is the predominant man in the interior country. He is not black, nor is he entirely white, but he has straight hair and features that indicate that he is a descendant of the original Indian stock, mixed with the Spanish conquerors who overran the country in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Probably the Panamanian has had less opportunity for advancement than the people of any other country in America. He has had no chance for national life or political self-expression. He has been the victim of the most vigorous and long-continued era of piracy and plunder that the New World has experienced. He has suffered from bad leadership when he has had any leadership at all. He has been exploited by everybody who came to the Isthmus. From the days of Morgan down to the formation of the present Republic, under American protection and guarantee of peace within and without, this native has been the outcast of the world and the national goat of the American flock of nations. He has been kept in ignorance and superstition by the exclusive control of a system of religious oppression and subjection, and if by chance he happened to acquire anything worth getting, somebody was always ready to take it away from him.

This native supplies the labor for such enter-

## 102 PROWLING ABOUT PANAMA

prises as have been launched in the fertile western regions of Panama. With anything like good treatment he gives a return for his wages, and if he has a chance to acquire sound health, an intelligent outlook on life, and a share in the results of his labors, he can be made over into a good citizen. He is not a bad citizen now, but he is very much undeveloped.

The products of this great interior region are many and their proceeds in the world's markets are profitable. Present prices make large opportunities for investment, and a reorganization of marketing facilities will mark the beginning of an era of prosperity for Panama. The list of products now being raised in and exported from Panama is a surprisingly long one, and the total of returns from these commodities would give a western real estate promoter material for many prospectuses and promises.

The chief products of the country at present are bananas, lumber, rice, sugar, cacao, meat, citrus fruits, corn, coffee, and coconuts. But there are a hundred other products, many of which indicate large returns if produced and marketed on a commercial scale. Rubber, ivory, nuts, hides, beans, pineapples, potatoes, yams, yucca, cotton, tobacco, plantain, a long list of fruits and vegetables of high value, and a number of minerals are but a few of the useful commodities now being supplied to the markets of the

Canal Zone and the world from the interior country of Panama. Nearly every vegetable that grows in the temperate climate does well in Panama. Some of the native fruits, such as papayas, mangoes, and alligator pears, are of delicious flavor and high value. The waters of Panama abound in vast quantities of fish, and there is supply for a number of fish canneries. Live stock thrives and is produced in considerable numbers in the provinces of Coclé and Chiriqui. The Canal Zone is now being used as a farming enterprise and stock grazing range by the administration of the Zone with the intention of making the Zone area self-supporting in meat and fruit and vegetables.

With an average import trade of ten millions and an export of more than half that amount, Panama is even today a factor in the world's markets. It must be said that the largest item on the import list is that of goods shipped to the Zone, and that the chief export is bananas shipped from Almirante, but these items indicate large possibilities in further developments of territories as yet untouched.



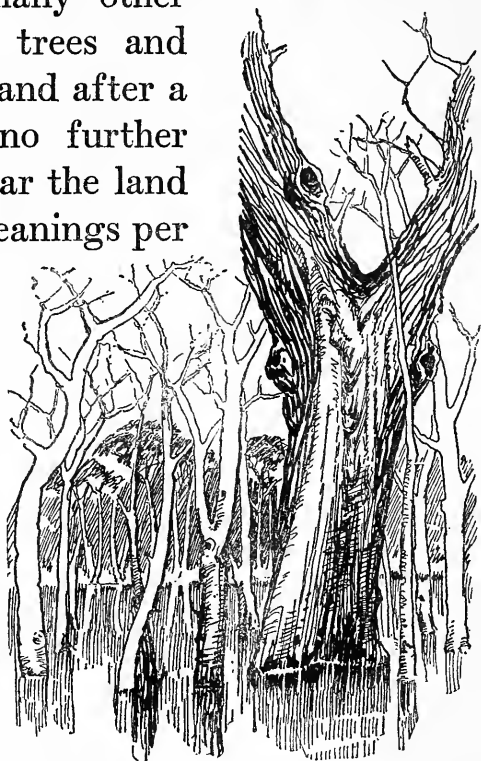
GOOD PINEAPPLES  
GROW HERE

## 104 PROWLING ABOUT PANAMA

The interior of Panama includes three general types of country, very different in climate and produce. The high mountains are a large area of country, much of which is fertile soil clear to the peaks, and all of which on the northern slopes is covered with jungle and forest. These wooded slopes are wet with abundant rainfall, and luxuriant foliage of tropical forms bewilders the traveler with illusions of fantastic creations of nature run mad over the earth. These mountainous parts are for the most part uninhabited, except by the more or less wild Indians, who live apart much as they were living four hundred years ago. No white men have tried to maintain themselves in these regions, and in some districts it is said that a white man's life is unsafe overnight. Tropical beasts and reptiles and birds abound among the weird forms of vegetation that seem to be perpetrating grotesque jokes on the bewildered visitor to the regions beyond the realm of civilized habitations. There are as yet no efforts made to establish towns or plantations in this country. Yet if cleared and cultivated, these regions are capable of supporting a population as dense as that of Porto Rico, where the steep hills and rocky peaks are covered with a population of over three hundred per square mile.

The jungle lands of Panama are elsewhere described, and where there is a jungle there are always rich land and abundant water, sometimes

too much water and need of drainage. The Canal Zone is mainly jungle land, and where it has been cleared for cultivation excellent results are attained. The cost of clearing this jungle is not so great as would appear from the fact that for bananas and many other forms of crop the trees and brush are cut down and after a time burned, and no further effort is made to clear the land except about four cleanings per year with a machette. Anything like plowing is unthought of for bananas and some other leading crops. Even sugar is often planted and left to shift for itself, under native methods, which are subject, of course, to improvement.



DEAD TIMBER IN GATUN LAKE NOW  
COVERED WITH ORCHIDS

The third class of land in Panama is the level or rolling prairie land known as savanas or llanos. These lands lie for the most part in the valleys back of Bocas del Toro and along the southern, or Pacific, coast of the country. From Chame to Cape Mala a belt of level country sweeps around

## 106 PROWLING ABOUT PANAMA

the Parita Bay. From ten to forty miles back of the coast rise the high mountains, and this fertile strip of country averages about thirty miles in width and is over a hundred miles long. Rolling country extends on west of this plain, but the plain itself contains enough good farming land to feed several millions of people. It is watered and drained by frequent rivers which cut across from the mountains to the sea every three or four miles and furnish every facility for cultivation. Most of this level country is first-grade soil and is adapted to the growing of almost any of the products of this tropical land. The general appearance of this open country suggests New Mexico or Southern California much more than any land below the tropic of Cancer. Its numerous towns and occasional good roads suggest a newly opened territory in the west, where there are abundant opportunities for growing up with the country. The newcomer is apt to be deceived into thinking that all things are now ready and all he has to do is to move in.

In the extreme western part of Panama lies the great Chiriqui Province with its best-developed region in the entire Republic. Here are great cattle ranches, sugar fields, rice plantings, cotton farms, cornfields, and here are American companies working to develop modern civilized conditions. Here is the Chiriqui Railroad between Pedrogal and Boquette, with a branch run-

ning westward. More interest has centered in this region than in any other part of Panama, and if the proposed railroad from Panama to David is ever built, the whole southern slope of western Panama will suddenly appear on the map of the world's granaries.

Road-building presents no unusual difficulties in this region such as confronted the Americans in the Philippines when they built the Benguet road up from Dagupan. Rainfall is high, but the country is comparatively level and well drained, and in many of these western provinces a graded dirt road has kept in good condition for ten years without repairs. During the dry season it is now possible to travel by coche over much of this country.

The climate of this interior country is dryer and cooler than that of Panama, which lies in the jungle area. In the dry season, which is also the windy season, and lasts in western Panama from mid-December to late in April, health conditions are excellent, and with proper precautions they are good all the year around. Needless to remark, the natives take no precautions whatever.

Good drinking water can be secured by sinking properly located wells, and this water shows freedom from minerals of a deleterious nature. There are seaports for coast vessels at almsot every river mouth, and roads lead back from these to the interior towns.

## 108 PROWLING ABOUT PANAMA

There is a fascination about travel through these interiors, But the trip must be made during the dry season. We left a large town one morning, paused on a hilltop to take a picture, which included a troop of cavalry out on a practice march. It was late, and the three of us departed at good speed, soon outdistancing the soldiers. Two days later a chance traveler informed us that the military men were anxious to interview travelers who had broken the rules with a camera and then vanished from sight. We passed the encampment on our way back, hung about town two hours, and proceeded. That night a solitary mounted soldier paused by our camp and remarked, "I'll bet you are the fellows they are hunting." We suggested that we were waiting to be found. Two weeks later, a secret service man called and inquired as to our business on that trip. Which is to say that Panama's interior is a roomy place in which a man might easily lose himself or find an empire. A good government, an infusion of energy, and a supply of capital will make a rich land of nature's great virgin farm.

## CHAPTER VIII

### ECONOMIC WASTE

IF it is true that South America is the victim of a bad start, it may also be said that Panama is the net result of a continuous and consistent follow-up campaign of wholesale demoralization through a long period of years.

Beginnings are apt to be determinative, and when reenforced by continuous applications of similar influences, are sure to set a stamp on a long period of civilization. Three centuries of rule or misrule make a considerable impression on any people. There is something more than climate to be taken into account in the search for causes of the present conditions in Panama.

The entire colonial program of Spain differed radically from that of the English in Canada or the United States in Hawaii or the Philippines. The leading motive of the conquistadores was the love of gold. Plunder, rapine, and devastation followed in the trail of the adventurers who fought their way across Panama and conquered Peru. Missionary zeal there was, but so mixed were the motives of these early heralds of the cross that the occasional man of pure and peaceful methods was often supplanted by the monk

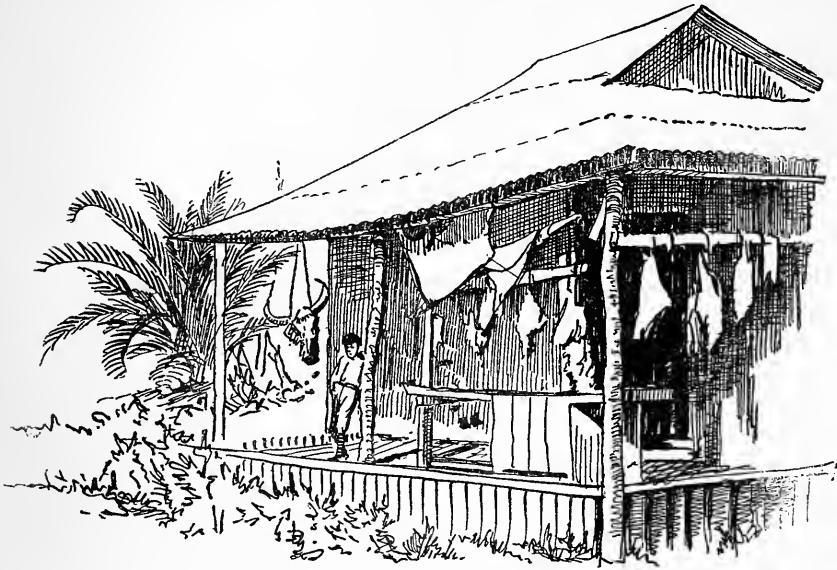
## 110 PROWLING ABOUT PANAMA

who used all means that he might make "Christians" of men who had no alternative but to be baptized or destroyed outright. "Better be dead than be damned," thought the energetic priests. Never was a dastardly deed wrought by the conqueror but there was a priest at hand with heaven's blessing on the crime. If this is doubted, read the unchallenged Prescott's Conquest of Peru.

Spanish colonial policies had small regard for the rights or development of the conquered. It was one of the viceroys of Mexico who said, "Let the people of these dominions learn, once for all, that they were born to be silent and obey, and not to discuss nor have opinions in political affairs."

The native village of the far interior country, away from the main roads and untouched by uplifting influences, exhibits the situation at its worst; but even so, these same villages exhibit a better condition than do the wretched Indian huts of the high Andes farther south. The population of these distant barrios on the Isthmus can hardly be classified on distinct lines; every symptom is accounted for and every unfavorable trait explained by historical factors and social forces that have combined to make remote Panama what it is to-day. There can be no radical change in these conditions until some new program of social uplift, educational progress, and spiritual life is introduced to cause a fresh reaction and begin a new life.

The ignorant native bears an intolerable burden of superstition. His contact with the form of church life that exists in these towns is mainly expressed in the celebration of occasional fiestas and the payment of fees for services rendered, and supposed in some way to benefit the contrib-



INTERIOR MEAT MARKET

utor or his dead relatives. If "the test of a religion is its results upon a people," then the impartial observer must draw his own conclusions.

That these interior towns are intensely conservative is to be expected. How could it be otherwise than that the methods of the fathers should be good enough for the sons? If human progress is not the result of dominant inner forces resident in human nature, but comes from the application of external stimuli, then the Pana-

## 112 PROWLING ABOUT PANAMA

manian may have some excuse for his situation, in a social history that has afforded little incentive for exercise of enterprise or industry.



THE FLAVOR OF OLD SPAIN

If the far interior of Panama is to be judged by present industrial efficiency, the case is lost before the trial begins. General absence of everything that marks a high grade of living emphasizes the failure of the status quo. Incompetence, bad management, childishness cry aloud from rotting buildings, rusting machinery, neglected plantings, impassable "roads," and impossible officials. Streets knee-deep in mire, mud-floored houses, through which pigs wander at will, shiftlessness, dirt, insanitation are the register of the wet season in interior Panama. The outstanding church building is often itself dirty and disheveled. Sidewalks exist only as balconies for individual houses, and vary in height at the caprice of the builder, making the middle of the street the only convenient highway for the passers-by.

The bulk of this out-of-the way business is handled by the ever-present Chino with his little tienda. If there is no Chinese store in the town, it is because the town is too poor to support one. Business involves effort and industry, both distasteful to the native, but breath-of-life to the Chinese.

Inspection of some native towns creates the impression that everybody just sits around all day. Along the streets the people lounge the idle hours away. Hundreds of young men lie about, rocking in chairs, lying in hammocks, hanging about corners. Women slowly move about their household duties, but the men are experts at the rest cure, and scarcely move at all. Once a young man gets a pair of shoes and a necktie, his industrial career abruptly terminates, and thenceforth he toils not, neither does he spin. He has arrived and is content.

Lack of energy brings inevitable localization of all interest and action. Most of the people have never been any distance from home and have no desire to travel. Travel means exertion of



TAKING THE REST CURE

some kind. I asked a guide to go one day further than the first-day trip for which I had hired him, and he returned an embarrassed and deprecating smile, as if I had asked him to go to the French front. It was too far from home.

It is impossible to get information worth anything about the country. "How many people live in this town?" brings one of two answers. Either it is, "I do not know," or it is "Bastante" ("Plenty"). "How far is it to Los Santos?" brings something like, "Señor, when the sun is there [pointing] you set out on your journey, and when it is over there, you will arrive."

We crossed a well-traveled road.

"Where does this road lead?"

"To the port, señor."

"And where does the other end of it go?"

"To San Pedro, señor."

"How far is it to the port?"

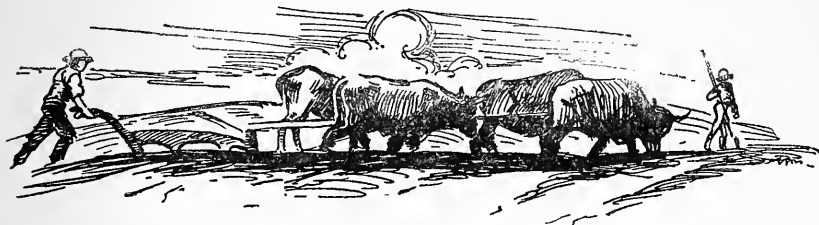
"The same distance as to San Pedro."

"And how far is that?"

"Bastante lejo, señor" ("Plenty far, sir").

Cultivation of crops is unknown. When the brush and trees are cleared the stumps are left about two feet high; it is easier to do the chopping at that point than lower down. After the fallen growth has sufficiently dried out it is burned off and the stumpy field usually planted to corn. This corn is allowed to shift for itself until ripe, and after the stalks have rotted awhile

the land may have an application of grass seed and be used for pasture, in hope that the stock will wear down the stumps until it becomes at last possible to perform an athletic feat, called for want of a more accurate term, "plowing." I saw four oxen all pulling in different directions, while



THE OXEN STAGE OF AGRICULTURE

a plow occasionally disturbed the weedy surface of the ground and turned up irregular lumps of hard soil. The proprietor looked on with pride and asked if I had ever plowed. I had. Did I plow like that? I did not. When this plowing has been acted out, and some sort of clod-breaking has taken place, sugar cane is planted, and the work of cultivation is ended. For a dozen years the cane will produce annual crops of more or less value without any attention whatever other than the cutting of the cane when ready for the mill.

An interior road is an experience. A road is a route of travel along which various persons make their way as best they are able, under such conditions of weather and impassability as happen to exist. In the dry season some of these

tracks wear down to a condition in which a cart can be coaxed over the right-of-way. In wet weather nearly all the native thoroughfares are wholly impassable except for sturdy oxen, which plow their way through the mud and sinkholes with deliberation born of long practice.

The man at the bottom of the scale is not to blame for his situation. He is the victim of a system that has made it exceedingly unwise for him to do anything other than what he does.

Poverty is the only protection of the people. For nearly two centuries pillage, plunder, piracy, and murder were the record of the Isthmus. Every buccaneer who sailed the Spanish main seems to have made a business of taking a chance at the Isthmus. It was open season for every kind of crook work that the minds of men could invent. Most of this activity was confined to the trade route in the middle of the Isthmus, but the influence and terror of this bloody age extended both ways as far as the country was inhabited. The common people were exploited, plundered, murdered, enslaved, and beaten at every turn.

Only a fool would work when to work meant that his head was marked for immediate oppression. If he forgot himself and got hold of anything of value, some one was ready to take it away from him without delay; and if he objected, he lost both his property and his head.

The social dregs that strayed to Panama or

stayed in Panama in those lurid days were men without character, conscience, or capacity for industry, other than in their favorite occupation of despoiling some one else.

These pirates and plunderers are gone, but they have left their tracks and traces in the civilization of the Isthmus. The common people today are mild and submissive; no other type could survive. It is possible to exist in dire poverty and pass the time without land or property, and that is the only kind of existence that holds any promise of peace to the man at the bottom.

There have been efforts on the part of the leaders of Isthmian life to inaugurate a new era and bring about improvements.

These efforts have been spasmodic and usually complicated by political considerations. Large appropriations have been made for roads, public buildings, machinery, schools, and mills, but while the money has been expended, it has gone like water in a sandy desert, and graft and inefficiency have swallowed up the funds with little or no results.

It has been supposed that appropriations for bridges, public markets, or good roads would in



WAYSIDE SELLERS OF FRUIT

## 118 PROWLING ABOUT PANAMA

some way take the place of industry and thrift and bring good times. Half-finished markets rear their ghastly skeletons in town centers. Rusting road-rollers stand idle, decaying machines lie neglected, and half-finished public

works are covered with cobwebs. Nobody notices, no one cares, and nothing is done.

A railroad was built with the evident idea that it would bring prosperity to a section of naturally rich country, but a railroad without crops is useless, and crops without labor are impossible, and labor without adequate returns is worth still less than it costs. The economic structure rests on



THE HOUSE BESIDE THE ROAD

the man at the bottom,

and when this human foundation is the prey and target of every one above him the result can be nothing other than general distress and inefficiency.

In some sections of the interior, as in the provinces of Coclé and Chitré, meat cattle of good quality are raised. Shipping facilities to the

Panama market are very good. There is no regular inspection, but the cattle are uniformly healthy and in good condition. The cattle-raising end of the trade is all right, but the market is a different matter. The cattle buyers in Panama are organized into what is known as the meat trust, and these buyers hold the sellers in subjection. Prices are kept down to the lowest possible basis, and monopolistic methods so well known in North America are in full swing.

Individual holders of interior ranchos have made earnest efforts to produce foodstuffs and introduce definite reforms into the methods of farming, but such persons have usually served as fearful examples to their neighbors. In an industrial system in which the one method of the man at the top is to keep his eyes open and whenever he finds anyone who has by chance or industry accumulated something, take it away from him—this does not stimulate long hours and speeding-up on the part of the men who do the work.

When the United States took over the Canal Zone and paid the purchase price to the new Republic of Panama, a good appropriation was made to the interior provinces for the building of a system of highways as the first step in a general improvement of the country. Most of the provinces have little to show for this expenditure of money. In one province reports were received

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that the money was being handed out in petty grafting operations and for political purposes and that no road was being built to speak of. An American engineer was sent to investigate. He reported the facts and was later put in charge of the "work." He reorganized the entire construction force, and at the expense of less than twenty thousand dollars built a road which has stood without repairs for a dozen years, and is in good condition to-day under heavy usage. But the reorganization pulled down on the engineer's head the wrath of the entire officialism of the province, and finally the men higher up in authority denounced the American for upsetting the smooth-working system at their expense. He had committed the unpardonable error of using the money to get results and build the road for which it was appropriated.

This is interior Panama at its worst. There are Americans who have invested their money and their personal supervision in the development enterprises in Chiriqui, and they are hopeful of better things. There are officials who are genuinely anxious to see a better age begin. And the day will come when this fair land will make men rich by the abundance of its products and the certainty of large returns upon development work done under favorable conditions. But the conditions do not yet exist in any stable form.

All of this is Panama at its worst, and forms

but the background of contrast for the picture of the fine possibilities that lie in the soil, and in the unreleased resources of a human stock that has never had a fair chance. Once separated from hookworm and superstition, given an industrial education, and assured competent leadership and certain returns for toil, and the lot of the Panamanian is no more incurable than that of any other victims of a bad system.

## CHAPTER IX

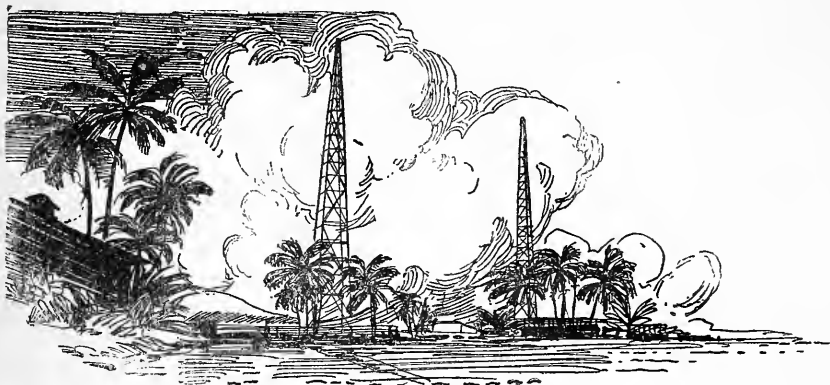
### PANAMA AND PROGRESS

THE coat of arms of the Republic of Panama bears the inscription, "The repudiation of war and homage to the arts which flourish in peace and labor." Under the existing treaty with the United States the first part of this excellent motto is guaranteed. Panama is a providential Republic and presents some of the finest possibilities of the American tropics. The educated Panamanians have not been slow to proclaim these rich resources, but no large advance has been realized yet. The government of Panama has been friendly to promotion plans and development projects, and has undertaken some ambitious enterprises on its own initiative, but the results have been on the whole disappointing.

American business men who have lived in Panama feel that no permanent success can be assured to such undertakings without the backing of the United States government. The officials of Panama naturally do not look with enthusiasm upon this idea and prefer to keep development enterprises within their own jurisdiction. And serious effort has certainly been made by the Panamanian government to support some of the

enterprises projected by native and foreign capitalists.

The causes of economic backwardness and social conservatism are not difficult to locate and describe. From the cruel savagery of Pizarro and Balboa to the model communities of the Canal Zone is a far step. In the past seventy-five years the city of Panama has passed through a thou-



WIRELESS AT DARIEN

sand years of social evolution, and in five years after Panama became an independent and sovereign nation the city was transformed, the government reorganized, and something like twentieth-century conditions replaced the filth and disease and squalor of the old days.

The prowler in social history will find plenty of material here. By all the precedents of progress Panama should have been prosperous centuries ago. While other cities of coming metropolitan centers were yet barren wastes and sleep-

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ing wildernesses Panama was on the highway of the world. When New York and San Francisco and Chicago were inhabited by birds and squirrels Panama was known everywhere. Panama had a century the start of all North America and was the pawn of kings and the gateway of empire before the Pilgrims landed in New England. If there be any advantage in an early start, Panama should have led us all in the race for a commanding position in the New World.

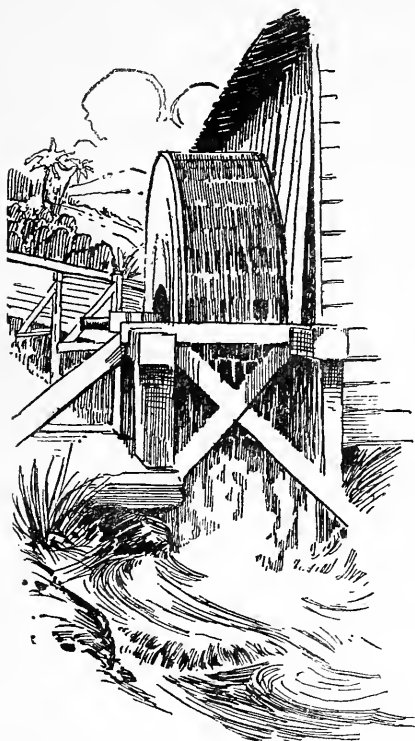
There is much in location. A single foot on Broadway is worth more than a farm in the desert. Great cities have great positions on the map, and Panama began with a situation to which the world simply had to come. A dozen different solutions of the transportation problem presented by the Isthmian power and navigation were proposed, but it always came back to Panama. Here is the narrowest part of the connecting link of the continents, and here is the lowest point in the continental backbone. Without lifting her hand or voice, Panama had but to dream and wait till the world should come and pour into her lap the commerce and progress of the modern age. To-day Panama is on the direct line of travel between almost any two great cities at opposite ends of the earth. Melbourne and London, New York and Buenos Ayres, Port au Spain and Honolulu—draw the lines, and they all pass through Panama.

It is an accepted axiom of unthinking people

that gold and prosperity are synonymous. If this were true, Panama should be the most prosperous and progressive of all cities of the earth to-day. More gold has been carried through her streets, and stored in her warehouses, and handled by her people, than in any other city of the Americas. The Peru of the Conquest was lined and lacquered with gold. The palaces of the Incas and the Temples of the Sun were plastered and burnished with gold; and for a century this gold was loaded into European ships, taken to Panama and packed across the Isthmus and then reshipped to Europe to fill the coffers of profligate kings and bolster up the fortunes of fallen states. All of it came through Panama; and if much of it did not remain there, it was not due to conscientious scruples on the part of the Panamanians. If a stream of gold could bring progress, Panama should have led the world for three hundred years.

Probably the modern Republic of Panama is one of the very few endowed governments in the world. The purchase price of the Canal Zone, invested in New York real estate, yields an annual revenue which forms a part of the government budget. The annual payment of \$250,000 by the Canal Zone also helps. Since the beginning of the French Canal enterprise a considerable part of the monthly payrolls of the Canal builders has found its way into the till of the

merchants in Colon and Panama, and these terminal cities have largely lived on the Canal Zone trade. Certainly, Panama has even to-day some peculiar financial advantages—and if these could bring prosperity, Panama should be prosperous.



FARM GRIST MILL, COSTA RICA

When the California gold rush began in 1848 Panama awoke from her century and a half of slumber and trouble began afresh. Again there was gold on the Isthmus, and again there was crime. Hundreds of ships discharged their cargoes and passengers on one side of the Isthmus, and the trip across was one not to be forgotten.

Now that the world has once more had to fight out the old battle of free institutions, it is worth while to remember that the oldest independent nation of the modern world is Panama; and that the first of the Spanish colonies to achieve freedom from the misgovernment of the old country was this same little nation on the Isthmus. Tired of the kind of

supervision which she had been undergoing from Europe, in 1826 Panama revolted, set up political housekeeping for herself, until she was later merged with the free New Granada—the modern Colombia.

If political independence has anything to do with advancement, then Panama should be very advanced indeed, for she led all her neighbors in achieving national separateness. The independence movement that swept over the western world a century ago affected Panama profoundly, and the microbe of political freedom soon produced a well-developed case of revolution—and the revolution was a success. Four score years afterward Panama again established her independence without the shedding of a drop of blood. If a spirit of independence can make a people prosperous, then Panama and prosperity should mean the same thing.

Panama has some peculiar political advantages to-day. Where other nations maintain their political sovereignty and internal peace at the cost of huge sums of money and by means of armies and battleships, Panama is spared this enormous drain upon her resources and men and money, and finds her political independence guaranteed against all the nations of the earth. Likewise she is sure of internal peace and is the only really war-tight, revolution-proof country in Latin-America. By the treaty entered into be-

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tween Panama and the United States, in return for the Canal Zone and other concessions, the United States guarantees the independence of Panama and agrees to step in at any time when it may be necessary and maintain order throughout the Isthmus. The Panamanians are not enthusiastic over this situation, and some of the politicians inwardly resent very bitterly an arrangement which makes impossible their chosen profession of agitators and revolutionary leaders.

There are people who tell us that the basis of national progress is economic and commercial. Given a land with all large resources, we shall perforce have a progressive people. Measured by this standard, Panama should lead all the rest. Her thirteen hundred miles of coast bound a narrow empire, but an empire of wonderful possibilities. Her inexhaustible soil, her frequent rivers, her rich jungles, her broad savanas, her high mountains and dense forests, her mines and climate and rainfall, and a world market right at her doors—all that nature could do to lay the foundations of material wealth seems to have been done here.

If so-called modern science and engineering skill can bring prosperity, then the Isthmus of Panama includes the site of the world's last achievement in engineering, sanitation, and organized efficiency. Health conditions on the Canal Zone are better than in many cities of the

United States. General Gorgas said that there were three causes for which the Americans left Panama in the old days: yellow fever, malaria, and cold feet, and that of the three the last caused more desertions than the other two combined. It is worth noting that the first two mentioned have now vanished entirely, and it but remains to find a preventive for frigid pedal extremities to make the tropics a white man's land.

Panama and Colon today are clean and healthful. Even the tropical buzzard that hovers over every town and crossroad in this mid-America world has disappeared from these cities—starved to death. The American Board of Health looks after the garbage cans and backyards and drains, and woe be unto the unhappy mosquito that inadvertently wanders into this forbidden territory. The entire country is now free from yellow fever, and while there is some malaria in the lowlands



HAPPY KINDERGARTNERS,  
PANAMA

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during the wet season, health conditions are far better than might be supposed.

The question of climate raises visions of burning days and sleepless nights. To people who have never lived in the tropics any lurid tale is plausible. But these tales of torment do not come from dwellers in the tropics, but from overheated imaginations of writers of fiction who find the tropics a rich field, because most of their readers know nothing of the subject. There are more comfortable days in Panama, per year, than in New York. There is rarely a night when one cannot sleep in comfort. If there were nothing the matter but the climate, there would be no reason for shunning Panama.

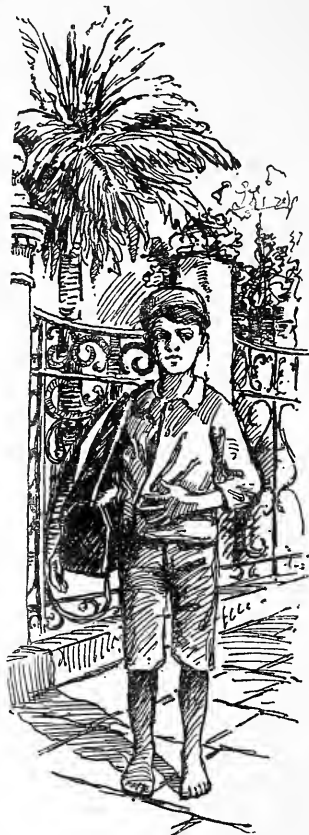
By all the rules of the great game of getting rich, Panama ought to be both prosperous and progressive. Seemingly every chance has come her way.

Yet the visitor does not find Panama as a whole either rich or energetic. The terminal cities, Panama and Colon, have lived pretty well off the proceeds of the Canal Zone, but the great interior country is sparsely inhabited by people who are neither prosperous nor progressive. Poverty, indolence, and dirt abound throughout the provinces. Education is attempted, and the present system, when perfected, will afford fairly good rudimentary training, but as now conducted it is a promise as well as a performance. With a

high illiteracy the people of Panama cannot be said to live on a lofty intellectual plane. Not one man in a thousand makes the slightest attempt to improve the country, or takes the least interest in what the world is doing.

In the capital city are educated and refined men, both prosperous and progressive. Their activities are divided among business enterprises, professional callings, and political activity. Very few of these men are interested in development projects to any extent. Agriculture as a basis of national wealth has little place in their thinking, unless somebody else can be induced to attend to the agriculture while they themselves take care of the wealth. Working on a farm is all right for ignorantes and peons, but has no interest for a gentleman. The develop-

ment of natural resources is not interesting unless it affords a percentage of some sort, to be earned without effort. The unfortunate fact is that such modern conditions as exist in Panama to-day have largely been brought to her ready-made,



YOUNG COSTA RICA IS  
ENTERPRISING

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which may be why she does not take more interest in them.

The question of morals and marriage laws is one which had better be let alone unless the prowler is prepared to find some very unpleasant things. All children are baptized, and, as before explained, the baptisms are registered and classified either as "Legítimo" or "Natural"—the latter, of course, being illegitimate. Only thirty per cent of the births of the Republic as a whole, are born of married parents. The reasons for this are not so simple as may at first appear. Panama has to-day a civil marriage law, but unless a man has abundant leisure, endless patience, and can afford to hire a lawyer or two, he had better be married somewhere else. Evidently, influences were brought to bear upon the framers of the civil marriage law which induced them to overload it with requirements that make it exceedingly unpopular. No voice of protest is raised against this scandalous moral situation on the part of the priests of the established church, who merely shrug their shoulders and shake their heads and say, "What can you do about it?" Certainly, they themselves do nothing at all except to ignore the situation.

There have been physical factors that have militated against the progress of Panama. While the climate is comfortable, most of the time it lacks stimulus. There is no "kick" in it.

Without occasional respites in a higher altitude and cooler atmosphere, the man from the north loses his driving power and his wife sometimes gets a case of nerves. Four hundred years of it will take the energy out of any man; and many of the present inhabitants of interior Panama appear to have lived here for about that length of time. For the development of high human effi-



WOODEN SUGAR MILL AND ITS MAKER

ciency it is required in a climate that it be something more than comfortable. It should at times be uncomfortable, and occasionally exasperating.

The workers of the Rockefeller Foundation have found eighty per cent of the people of the provinces afflicted with hookworm. Highly commendable is the work done by these representatives of the Institute, but so long as the common people know nothing of sanitation, clean and

pure food, present conditions will continue. And physical "hookworm" is accompanied by a similar mental condition. There is a moral hookworm throughout the country, and life slumps down to a hand-to-mouth drag from one day to the next. Both physical and mental conditions are better in the cities, of course, but there is still room for a moral prophylactic.

There are social forces which have largely accounted for this result. Possibly no place in the world shows more mixed blood than Panama. Shades and colors and tints and tones there are, and blends indescribable and also impossible to analyze or trace. The artists tell us that the combination of the primary colors with white results in a tint, while blending a primary color with black gives a shade. Well, most of these tones are shades, for the same scientific reason as that mentioned by the artist. From the Caribbean world has come its contribution of the West Indian Negroes, with consequent shady result.

The social results of this mixture are various and distressing, but well understood by anyone who has lived in the interior of Panama. Even the cities are affected in the same way. Social standing, political availability, and personal influence are largely determined by the degree of whiteness—or darkness—that prevails in the skin. And the general desire of the ignorant and unmoral native of the interior to "lighten up the

breed" has led to a moral situation that bodes no good for the away-from-home white man who may be living for a longer or shorter time in the up-country provinces.

Any aggressive North American, especially if he be from the West, looks upon the splendid areas of land, the fine rivers, the dense forests, and the other untouched resources of this rich country with amazement, and begins to plan development projects and dream of organizing syndicates, but the native loses no sleep over such vain imaginings. If he dreams at all, it is of his food if he be poor, and of politics if he be rich. Development in the North American sense is a disgrace, and no job for a gentleman. The smooth savanas may lie there untouched till kingdom come, for all he cares. The only interest in life is political manipulation. Law and politics are the two occupations most esteemed, and Panama is not different from other countries in the frequent association of these two professions.

Whence comes this emphasis on political activity, to the neglect of commerce and agriculture? It comes from Europe with the early inheritance of the first settlements and rulers of this Latin world. For them any form of physical work was dire disgrace. "These two hands have never done an hour's work" was a boast and badge of quality. The climate of the tropics made this philosophy of life easy to accept and follow, and what

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the leaders lived the followers did faithfully keep and perform. Of course somebody had to do a little work and raise a few vegetables and cattle, but the game was to find the unfortunate worker and then take away from him the product of his toil. Thus the getter lived without work and taught the loser the uselessness of further exercise.

By way of clearness these conditions are here described in their worst and final form. Bad as they are, they are not the whole truth. It takes more than mixed blood and hockworm and snob-bishness to account for the present social conditions of Central America.

If moral conditions in Panama to-day are not ideal, it is not due to any absence of church or lack of religion. With the explorers and conquerors of the sixteenth century came the missionaries and priests. Crosses were set up, bells were hung, masses were said, and everywhere the elaborate ritual of the Spanish church was maintained. Whole villages were "converted," baptized, and labeled as good Catholics in a day's time. Massive and beautiful churches were soon built in centers of population, and every village has its church, often representing nearly as much value as half of the houses of the town combined.

From the beginning until the coming of the North American to finish the Canal the Roman Church has had exclusive and uninterrupted oc-

cupation of this entire territory. There has been no competition, and there have been no interferences with her moral and spiritual leadership.

But in spite of this situation, or perhaps because of it, moral conditions are what they are in Panama to-day. Out of the closed Bible and the bound consciences of this system have come social incapacity and intellectual helplessness in all the fields of human activity. Most of Latin-America



PUBLIC MARKET, DAVID

has not yet learned that the intellect, like the nation, cannot exist half slave and half free. Only free consciences can guide free citizens to the founding of free political institutions and social activities. A successful democracy can never be reared upon a foundation of superstition and spiritual despotism. More than all other factors this moral blight and spiritual dry-rot is what is the matter with Panama. The moral and spiritual climate of a people has more to do with the growth or destruction of a spirit of progress

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than do thermometers and telephones and declarations of independence. Until the spirit of a Panamanian becomes a free spirit and he is permitted to think and worship after the dictates of a free conscience, Panama can never become a progressive nation.

Highly favored among the nations of the earth, this little country affords a strategic opportunity for the setting up of a national experiment in development and progress. If this undertaking is to succeed, there must be added to the large economic, social, and strategic resources of the country the element of a free spirit and an enlightened conscience. Out of these will come a sense of the dignity of labor, the worth-whileness of education, and the development of the now dormant resources of this beautiful land.

The problem of progress in Panama is inevitably linked with that of Protestantism. Work was begun by the Methodist Episcopal Church in Colon under Bishop William Taylor, and a strong West Indian congregation was gathered. This was later turned over to the Wesleyan Methodists, who maintain considerable work among the West Indians of the Caribbean Islands. With the purchase of the Canal Zone by the United States, the Methodists began to plan for work in Panama and eventually established a Spanish church and school at the head of Central Avenue, opposite the national palace.

But no serious effort was made by this denomination to meet and master the problems that arose from exclusive Protestant occupation of the Spanish-speaking section of the field until the time of the noted Panama Congress in February, 1916. Here met representatives of the Protestant movement in all Latin-America, and general principles of comity and cooperation were established and adopted. Under this working agreement, the Spanish work in the Republic of Panama was assigned to the Methodists as a unit of responsibility. To this area Costa Rica was later added. West Indian work was not included in this survey, and it is to be hoped that some similar representative and authoritative body may yet undertake to bring order and comity out of the unorganized, though friendly, confusion of West Indian denominational programs now existent.

The Pan-Denominational Congress of 1916 made definite the responsibility for Spanish work in Panama, and the denomination now in charge of this field is working on a program somewhat adequate to the strategic importance of the very conspicuous location beside the Canal Zone. When fully realized and in operation, this program of work will wield a wide influence in the Spanish-American world. A large factor in this new program has been the interest and enthusiasm of the young people of the California Conference Epworth League, who have done much

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to make possible an enlargement of the work undertaken.

Too much praise cannot be given to the earnest and efficient missionaries who founded and have maintained this mission. The Seawall Church has already sent out its influences to the ends of the earth. The standards and results attained in Panama College, so far as that institution has been developed, have exerted a strong influence on the educational and moral life of the city and of the republic. The work in 1919 included a Spanish base at the Seawall location, with its church and school, and American congregation, a West Indian school and church in Guachapali, a Spanish mission Sunday school and evangelistic service in the school building kindly loaned by the Wesleys, a Spanish mission school and preaching service in Guachapali, a West Indian Sunday school and service at Red Tank, and a Chinese mission near the market. Present plans for future expansion include, in addition to the work now under way at David, an adequate program of interior education and evangelization, an industrial and agricultural school, a strong institution church in Panama, an institution of higher education, and adequate work in Colon.

This mission shares with the Northern Baptist Convention and the Northern Presbyterian Church denominational responsibility for most of Central America. The Baptists have work in

Honduras, Salvador, and the Presbyterians in Guatemala and in Colombia, further south. The Methodists complete the chain by the occupation of Panama and Costa Rica, in which latter republic work was begun in the latter months of 1917. Costa Rica presents an attractive field with its good climate, fertile country, Spanish-speaking population of intelligence, and large capacity for progress. The new mission met with success from the start and promises rapid growth.

The three denominations named are working together in complete harmony and have developed a unified program of Christian education for Central America, as the beginnings of further coordination of effort. There is no overlapping, no competition, and, above all, no overcrowding, in this promising but sparsely occupied field. The Protestant denominational front on this field is well unified.

There are several independent missions working in this field, some of which do not find it in their purposes to unite in any general movement, and none of which place emphasis on education. Chief among these is the Central America Mission which maintains workers in all the republics of Central America who confine themselves largely to evangelistic effort.

All of the Central republics have constitutional religious liberty, and the work of Protestantism is officially welcome everywhere. Of petty perse-

cutions and ecclesiastical opposition there are numerous examples. The spirit of the Inquisition still smolders beneath the surface, but the new spirit of world-democracy makes more and more grotesque and futile the intolerance and bigotry of the Dark Ages.

Protestantism in Latin-America has been in the van of every movement toward progress and has contributed much toward the foundations of the new era. Without the Protestant movement, the present state of advance would be impossible. To-day Protestantism is in the anomalous position of being inadequate in equipment and manpower to meet the situation created or to supply the demands arising everywhere for adequate expression of free institutions. The lump is large and the leaven has been small, but the contagion of liberty and the awakening of conscience demand an adequate equipment and program.

There is promise of a new and worthy approach in the large purposes of the great denominations to undertake in adequate manner a program of world-reconstruction made imperative by the close of the great war. The collapse of all but moral and spiritual forces as a guarantee of peace renders all former alignments obsolete and forces the church to new methods and more comprehensive undertakings. It is now resolved to go up and possess this goodly land on the mere borders of which we have lingered for

nearly a century. The coming generation will see a reorganization and reconstruction of the Protestant program in Latin-America, and before the end of the twentieth century this mighty continent will have attained a noble citizenship in the neighborhood of great races.

## CHAPTER X

### KNOWING OUR NEIGHBORS

WHATEVER the cause or results, the fact stands that we are not well acquainted with our nearest national neighbors. Like the modern city-dweller, we know least about those who live nearest. The North American knows more about the other side of the world than he does about those who live on the same continent with him. Neither the North American nor his southern neighbor has treated the other fairly.

Many of us have not yet discovered that there be any Latin-American. Some one lives south of the line, of course, but that fact has made little impression on our minds. In our mental geography the American world shades off into a hazy and troubled region southward about which we have known little and cared less. Our geographical studies have helped us but little. It is possible to know every physical fact about a country without knowing the hearts of the people.

It is an anomaly that we know less about our Latin neighbors than we do of Europe or Asia. By historical ties and constant reminders of commerce and immigration we are aware of our transatlantic cousins. We have discovered the Far

East and have some interest therein, even though it be the interest pertaining to a museum or a menagerie. But until very recently neither immigration, commerce, nor curiosity has stirred us to acquaintance with our continental neighbors.

This ignorance is part of our general antebellum attitude toward all the world lying south and east. In fact, we never bothered much with anybody outside of the United States. Over a century we lived on, secure in the idea that we were immune from European militaristic contagion and all-sufficient unto ourselves. The rest of the world might perchance sink into the sea, but we would go on blissfully without it. Our "free institutions" were self-sufficient and all-inclusive. And

because we were able to compose our own troubles and keep out of other peoples' quarrels, more or less, we assumed that we were automatically superior to the rest of the world, "of course."

We of the United States have been likened



INDIAN BOY GOES TO  
SCHOOL

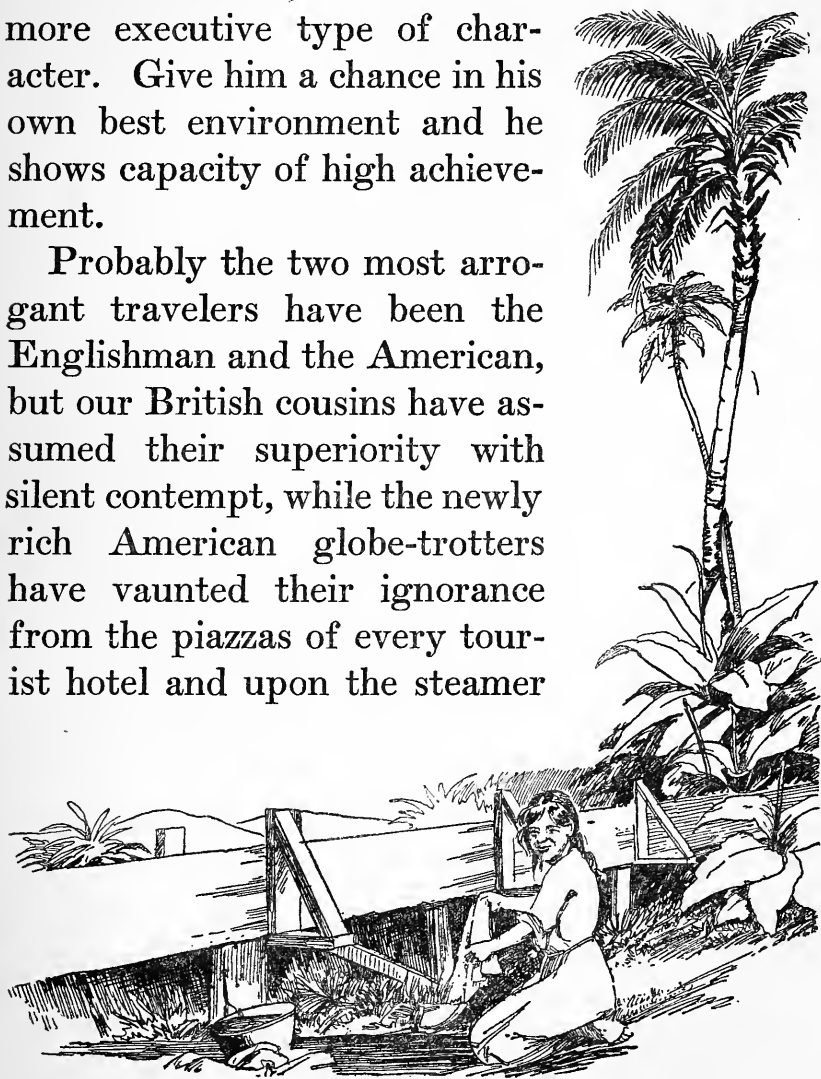
unto a householder living on a plot of ground rich enough to support his family. Resolving not to become entangled in neighborhood alliances, he constructed a hundred-foot wall about his property and lived securely within. The right-hand neighbor might be an anarchist and the man on the left a cannibal. If the man in the rear were a polygamist and the dweller across the street had a habit of using firearms indiscriminately it mattered nothing to the householder—so long as the wall held. But it came to pass that an earthquake destroyed that wall, and the said exclusive citizen suddenly found himself out on the street with his neighbors. And behold, it mattered much what sort of neighbors they were. There was nothing to do but get acquainted and help make the neighborhood a decent place in which to live.

Since the world war has battered down the wall with which we sought to separate ourselves from other nations, we have nothing left but to recognize and accept our place in the national neighborhood and do our share to make it decent.

The Latin-American has been at a disadvantage in the character of the continent in which he lives. South America is a land for promoters, organizers of industry, hardy pioneers of production, engineers, planters, and rugged explorers of commercial frontiers. The poetic and artistic temperament of the Latin has suffered an unfair

criticism because of the ill adaptation of his temperament to his environment. Sunny Italy and picturesque France and vine-clad Spain were more to his tastes and abilities. That he has done as well as he has speaks much for his adaptability to a situation better suited to a more executive type of character. Give him a chance in his own best environment and he shows capacity of high achievement.

Probably the two most arrogant travelers have been the Englishman and the American, but our British cousins have assumed their superiority with silent contempt, while the newly rich American globe-trotters have vaunted their ignorance from the piazzas of every tourist hotel and upon the steamer



WASHDAY IN COSTA RICA

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decks of every sea. It is really not strange that we failed to notice the very considerable and important populations of countries lying at our doors.

The North Americans are not travelers. Few of us do go anywhere, and fewer still know how to travel successfully. The poorest traveler in the world is the society tourist who goes about trying to reproduce home conditions in a foreign land. So far as possible he escapes the life and message of the country in which he sojourns and returns with little else but tales of social functions, a la American, and comparative accounts of expenses at tourist hotels. From the first day out he isolates and fortifies himself against the very things that travel alone can give. He brings home a few trinkets made to sell, some cocksure criticisms of customs, people, and missionaries, and a swelled head. But he has been abroad—save the mark!

Travel is a specific for provincialism, but it must be real travel and not imitation homeswagger. Intelligent and sympathetic travel breaks up the hardening strata of thought, pushes back the narrowing horizon, loosens the set fibers of the soul, and is the surest cure yet known for mental arterial sclerosis. The right kind of travel shifts the viewpoint, readjusts life forces, and shakes up the provincialism of the man with the "township horizon." And when the disturbed

atoms of character reassemble it is in a different mode and with a new cycle.

It is to be said that the South American has not taken much interest in us. Since he has made out to get along without us, he cannot be very important. The Oriental has shown some desire to move into our basement, or at least the woodshed or the washhouse, and we have discovered him. The European has shown his good taste by coming over and moving right in with us, and in time we cannot distinguish him from ourselves. But the South American has gone his way, and in the main has minded his own affairs, and therefore cannot amount to much. If he were a social problem, we would know him better. If he had a penchant for the police force or an itch for office among us, we would cultivate his acquaintance, and perhaps invite him to call.

During the past two decades the once despised Chinese have become popular among us. Their utter difference from ourselves, their solid human qualities, their marvelous vitality, their commercial solidarity, their response to the stimuli of the modern world, their astonishing versatility, their wonderful national history—these and a hundred other things stir our imagination, and we have rather suddenly discovered that we like the Chinese—especially at a distance.

We are well aware of Japan, not so much through any perceptions of our own as through

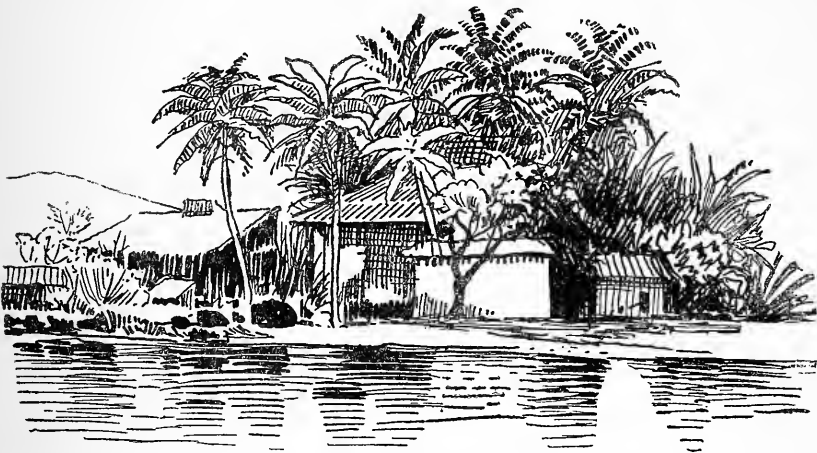
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Japan's insistence upon attention. We can on short notice make out a rather comprehensive list of Japanese characteristics, and, in truth, we find Japan interesting. The marvelous energy of her people, her high ambitions, her Oriental viewpoint, her great commercial and military successes, her artistic setting, her marvelous skill of hand, and, not least, her abundant interest in our own affairs—these and other items make it quite the thing to be interested in Japan. But who cares anything about a lot of dirty peons? They are not in good form.

But this interest in the Orient is more curiosity than it is race sympathy. There is a great gulf fixed between the yellow man and the white, and racially that gulf can never be bridged. The occasional marriages between the East and West need no comment; they tell their own story. Neither China nor Japan can ever become American in any racial sense. When Chinese and Japanese come to America for any but educational and temporary purposes, they set up Chinatown and little Japan wherever they go. American character is a most complicated composite of many races, but from Tokyo to Bombay there is no Oriental factor that will blend with the mixture of races that makes up America.

Our Oriental interest is confined to the races that have impressed themselves upon our imagination. The Philippines, in spite of our national

relation to the islands, do not seem to us very real nor very important. They will soon be keeping house for themselves, and then we shall forget them except as an interesting historical incident. And as for India, that is British, and about all we know is that the Hindu wears a turban, maintains a very undemocratic caste, exists in unaccountable numbers, is subject to annoying and



RIVERSIDE PLANTATION

frequent famines, and on the whole is a rather helpless lot, except as some bearded fakir entertains companies of badly balanced American society women with hyperbolated essence of sublimated nonsense.

But the Latin-American is blood of our blood, kin of our kind, and lives on the same continental street, which is why we are so little interested in him. He is neither quaint, curious, nor crazy. He is not good for first-page headlines except

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when he breaks out in revolution or forgets our Monroe Doctrine. There is no fixed gulf of difference between him and us, and in the final fusing of American character he must contribute a large part.

To ignore the Latin-American is to be convicted of historical ignorance. From Dante to the great South American leaders and scholars of to-day the Latin races have been neither sleeping nor idle. During the last five hundred years more than one half of Western history has been made by Latin races. It was a Latin who discovered America. Another first sailed around the globe. Latin peoples explored, conquered, and settled both Western continents, and gave a language which has become the permanent speech of two thirds of the Western world. To call the roll of artists, painters, sculptors, poets, dramatists, novelists, musicians, explorers, missionaries, and scientists for the past five centuries is to prove that a majority of the names mentioned in the world's illustrious hall of fame are from Latin races. To mention Curé, Pasteur, and Marconi is to remind us of the scientific progress of modern Latin minds, and to speak of France and Italy as pioneers in democracy is to keep within the facts. It was in Italy that Browning and Tennyson and George Eliot and a host of other writers found inspiration and material to feed the fires of genius.

Whatever may be said of the modern degeneracy of the dominant religious system of Latin-American countries, it is true that the sixteenth century saw in Spain one of the most virile and comprehensive missionary movements of all history. Never before nor since have missionary efforts been projected on so vast a scale or by so powerful procedure. Monks and priests went out and established the cross and the confessional through the Western world and in the islands of the sea, and, whatever else we may say, there can be no disparagement of the permanency of the results of these conquests. The Latin world is still dominantly Roman in its religious life, and shows very positive preferences for the religion of the conquistadores. To give a language and a religion to two thirds of the American continents is not the work of weaklings nor of degenerates.

This Latin neighbor of ours not only lives on the same street but he lives in a bigger and better house than ours. To the "lick-all-creation" type of Fourth-of-July American this is rank heresy, but facts have little regard for fireworks. With twenty-eight per cent of the population of the Americas, the Latin holds sixty-five per cent of the territory and fully the same proportion of natural resources. His soil, his rivers, his mountains, his harbors, his mines are as good as ours, and he has more of them. In the western hemi-

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sphere he controls the longest rivers, the highest mountains, the largest area of habitable land, the longest sea-coast, and the entire inexhaustible fertility of the tropics. His untouched and uncharted natural resources are beyond computation. His estate is second to none in the entire world, and he could spare enough for the crowded millions of India or the swarming islands of Japan and never miss it. All of this we would have discovered sooner but for the world war, which focused all attention on the main issue and postponed the direct results of the successful completion of the Panama Canal. With a normal supply of shipping, the west coast alone of South America would keep the Canal busy much of the time and affect American markets profoundly.



JUNGLE PRODUCTS

In material achievements our neighbor has not been idle, though some of his attempts have resulted in failure or

fiasco. He has built great and beautiful cities, he has constructed long and difficult railroads over tortuous mountain systems, he has developed huge industries and organized big commercial enterprises. He has produced a civilization in keeping with his character, artistic, homogeneous, progressive, and on a high intellectual plane. His libraries, theaters, and public buildings are a credit to his taste and skill, and his churches are massive and stately as the rock-ribbed mountains that tie together the whole system from El Paso to Patagonia.

We have heard more or less of a Pan-Americanism, but we have never taken it seriously. As subject for diplomatic papers, magazine articles, and after-dinner oratory the all-America idea has been a refuge of word-venders. But so long as the bulk of South American trade was with Europe our brand of fraternal talk was harmless—also helpless; and the reason for our failure to do business with South America has not been entirely the neglect of our shippers. The larger exports of South America have all been to Europe, and with ships loaded both ways the American exporter was hopelessly handicapped in his effort to secure favorable freight rates. When American salesmen tried to compete with German and French and Spanish exporters they always failed to secure freight rates that gave them an even chance.

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For years American manufacturers ignored the Orient and lagged far behind European dealers in the same class of goods, to their own large loss. The same neglect has produced the same result in South America. Germany pursued a very different policy. Without trumpet or flag Germany sent her agents to practically every Latin-American center and seaport, and there the unostentatious German proceeded to control as much business as possible, and generally get hold of the situation. Often he took unto himself a wife of the country, but never for one day did he forget that he was a representative of the Vaterland. His house, his furniture, his methods, his ideas were one hundred per cent German. An American ship doctor went ashore from a German liner in a small South American seaport and stumbled upon the inevitable German man of business. He was invited home to dinner and shown through the house with much pride by the half-German children. One after the other, furniture, books, pictures, clothing even were exhibited and with every article was repeated the formula, "Es war in Deutschland gemacht." It was a great game, and it was working along smoothly until things slipped in Europe, and now the end no man can see. But there is going to be a great chance for American capital and enterprise and business energy in the years when German energy will be needed at home.

In one of the Central American republics an American, while present at a social function, remarked casually to a friend that in his opinion the cure for the political upheavals of that country would be in the polite but firm intervention of the United States. A German business man, overhearing the remark, hastily interposed, "Not at all, sir; that is what Germany is in this country for." With a concerted and well-considered policy of business extension in South American countries Germany deserved the commercial advantages that she had gained in the twenty-five years preceding the war period.

When questioned as to the remarkable success of the German commercial propaganda, South American leaders rarely fail to mention the fact that the German business man in Latin lands invariably speak the language of the country. Catalogues are issued in Spanish or Portuguese, as local conditions require. Measures, technical terms, and methods of handling goods are all adapted to local usage, and the South American merchant is considered and consulted in all the mechanism of exchange and handling of goods. Contrasted with North American ignorance of conditions and ignoring of language and custom, it is not strange that Europe has controlled the trade of Latin-America.

In view of all that is involved of national development, international entanglements, commer-

cial expansion, and racial affinity, it would seem to be about time that we become acquainted with our neighbors, or, rather, in our neighborhood. If we are going to live on this great American highway, it may be well to be on good terms with the rest of the folks.

Aside from commercial and linguistic considerations, there are four reasons for our ignorance of the lands and people south of the United States.

1. The American people are not well acquainted with any other people on earth. Geographical isolation has had much to do with this, and racial self-sufficiency has had still more effect upon our lack-of-thinking about our neighbors. Had South and Central American countries been pouring millions of immigrants into our cities, we would know something about them, but the Latin has had no need to immigrate, since he has more room in his own house than he could find in ours.

2. American travel abroad has been practically all to Europe, with an increasing number who have seen something of the Far East. And it is impossible to be anything but densely ignorant of any people whose faces we have never seen, whose country we have never visited, whose history we have ignored, and whose language we cannot understand. No real interest is possible without knowledge, and the main trouble between the American and his neighbors is plain ignorance.

3. The war with Spain in 1898 resulted in much indifferent prejudice on our part against everything Spanish. Spain was not prepared for the blow that fell upon her, and perhaps her colonial system deserved the destruction that was administered, but we came out of the war with a more or less good-natured contempt for anything and everything that savored of Spain. We escaped with little or no spirit of hatred or lust of conquest, but we marked down the Latin world at bargain prices—and then let Europe walk away with the bargain. As a matter of fact, Spain has little to do with the American situation. Spain herself in the past fifteen years has made rapid strides forward, but in the average American mind anything Spanish cannot be very efficient.

4. Our Monroe Doctrine has begotten a certain arrogance of attitude toward all our southern neighbors. Our attention has been called southward only when revolution or anarchy or European interference has compelled us to take a hand for our own ultimate self-protection. It is only when our neighbors have failed to keep the peace and have threatened to carry their quarrels into our yard, or have been in danger of being beaten up by European military police, that we have taken the trouble to notice them. From this situation it was inevitable that an attitude of patronage should arise, and patronage is not a basis of national cooperation or mutual understanding.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE FAMILY TREE

WHEN came this Latin-American? Is he a mystery, a complex, or a racial conundrum defying analysis and baffling understanding? So many people have said. Others have reported a something impossible to name or describe about this man from the southlands—all of which is nonsense. There are few human mysteries when once we have the key. Any people may be understood if we know their racial origin, social history, and reaction-power. Such knowledge usually explains these so-called race peculiarities.

As North Americans we are ourselves the present product of social forces that have driven us for centuries past. With a northern European race origin we have been mixed in many molds and infused with many tinctures till we emerge a new blend of blood. This new and vigorous stock shows a reaction-power that has made much of educational, scientific, and material opportunities, but, after all, these traits themselves are largely the result of the social stimuli of the past five hundred years. Had our ancestors in the sixteenth century removed to Spain, we should all now be Spanish dons.

If we could know the social, religious, intellectual, domestic, industrial, and political environment of a people, we could account for ninety per cent of race characteristics. And this social history measures, not only potent forces and compelling sanctions, but itself in turn registers reactive power and character values.

The Latin-American has no cause to apologize nor explain when we inquire into his racial antecedents. Out of the remote ages of antiquity a branch of the human family moved westward, and on the Italian peninsula developed a civilization and founded a city that in time dominated the world. The lust of conquest and the intoxication of power debauched the rulers of Rome, but the rising Christian Church took over the scepter, and for fifteen hundred years Rome dominated the civilization of the world. Fundamentally, there was no difference between the blood of southern and western Europe, and but for the corrupt and demoralizing influence of the papacy and its trailing blight upon the human spirit Rome might still have been the dominant power of European civilization. The abuses that compelled the Reformation



SAN BLAS INDIAN CHIEF

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also vitiated the Latin spirit. The wakening life of the sixteenth century shifted the center

westward but the blight of papal despotism kept the Latin races from their full share in the developments and democracy of the modern age. And now that the Teutonic peoples of the north have become the victims of the most deadly despotism that the world has yet produced, it is possible that the center and motive of progressive thought in continental Europe may again swing to the southern peoples.



NO RACE SUICIDE HERE

No one can trace the splendid march of the Latin races through the conquests and explorations and discoveries of the later fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and then read the record of achievements down to the present time and still maintain that there is anything decadent about the Latin races. Had the Roman yoke been broken from the Latin neck as it was from the Teuton, we should have had a very dif-

ferent tale to tell, and the dominant civilization of the twentieth century might have been Latin instead of Saxon.

A closer examination of the social factors that have dominated the Latin-American world and produced the present composite result on the western hemisphere reveals three decisive factors that have in combination produced our neighbors.

All Latin-America reflects a European background. Nearly all relations of life are defined in European terms. Out of the more or less subconscious inheritance and ideals of European origin arise the sanctions of social relations. Ideals of politics, business, education, home life, social customs, and religion all come from this fountain of associations. The church in South America is the church in southern Europe. The *collegio* is not the North American college, but the European school which grants a Bachelor of Arts degree at what corresponds to the end of the freshman year in an American college. South American "republics" have their "prime ministers," and the electorate is on the European basis. The presidents of some of these republics exercise more arbitrary power than the king of England or the entire executive of the United States. They are European "presidents." Revolution is not the incurable habit of the "people" but the profession of a few adventurers who oppress and afflict the long-suffering and usually silent

populace. This is not saying that revolution is a characteristic of European political procedure, but that the forms of representative government imposed upon the ideals of dictatorship and monarchy produced the curious mixture of revolutionary political progress known as a South or Central American "republic." South American



JUNGLE GUIDE

democracy is a hybrid product of European ideals and American forms of government. Naturally enough, it is neither one thing nor the other, and will not be anything very different until new forces are brought to bear upon the political life of the Latin people.

A second factor in the making of the Latin-American is his isolation for three hundred years from the currents of Western economic and political life. Practically all our North American stock of ideas and social sanctions has been developed since the Pilgrims landed in New England. The great basic impulse that sent men and women westward in search of religious liberty has persisted and widened and developed a homogeneous system of political ideal that has become the unquestioned

background of our whole political system. From free consciences have come free institutions, free schools, free votes, and as long as it lasted, free land, unrestricted economic opportunity, and a welcome to the world. Upon this foundation have been reared American independence, modern democracy, higher education, the feminist movement, scientific advance, and American Protestantism.

Certain influences from this stream have affected Latin-American life. The nomenclature of South American politics is that of the United States, and many constitutions contain provision for every modern practice. But these model constitutions are like a beautiful and costly piano imported into a home where no one knows how to use it. It takes

a democratic spirit to get democracy out of a democratic constitution. The best piano yields only discord, and the most advanced constitution does not prevent revolution if there be no musicians or statesmen to play and administer. Peo-



ONE USE FOR A HEAD

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ple living beside the stream of democratic progress have caught the names and forms drifting on the current, but only those people have advanced with the current who have not been tied to the shore by moral and intellectual despotism.

The influence of geographical nearness is slight beside that of historical background and social relations. Mexico is much closer to Spain than to the United States. After twenty years of successful administration of the Philippines on the most colossal scale of national benevolence that the world has ever seen, nearly all the Filipinos who had reached maturity in 1898 are still Spanish at heart and out of sympathy with American ideals and administration. If the United States can hold the islands until every person who was ten years old or over in 1898 is thoroughly dead and safely buried, there will be a chance for some form of democracy, but the old-time leaders will retain so long as they live the ideals derived from three hundred years of Spanish administration.

If there are in the mountains of the South isolated neighborhoods that have been passed by in the current of modern American progress, and are to-day practically ignorant of all that makes up American life, even though surrounded on all sides by the march of a virile and restless race, what must be the results of the isolation from this stream of North American development, of the whole Latin-American race, while maintaining

close and vital connections with European standards and ideals?

But Latin Americanism can never be explained merely by its European background and its isolation from the progress of North America. The keynote to the present product in Latin lands is to be found in that system of religious despotism that has checked the free growth of every people whose life it has dominated.

Jesuitism is what is the matter with the civilization southward. We have had Romanism and Jesuitism in the United States, but people who have never seen any form of these forces except that which has developed in the free air of North America have much to learn. Romanism checked and balanced by a virile Protestantism and a democratic political life is an altogether differ-



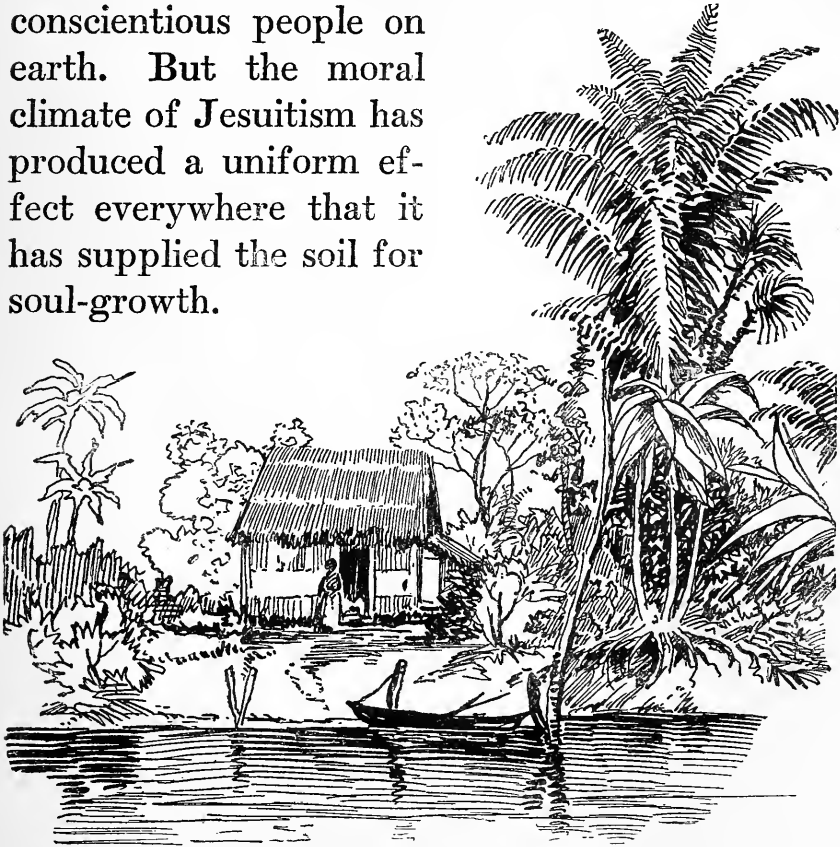
BEGGARS AND CATHEDRALS

ent institution from Romanism dominant, degenerate, and intolerant. The latter becomes the religion of the bound Bible, the chained spirit, and the crippled conscience. It is the center of spiritual infection and the microbe of moral weakness. No land has ever advanced under its leadership. Like a blight on the human spirit, it has cast its spell of ignorance and superstition over the millions of men and women who have had no other ethical code or spiritual leadership.

It has been claimed that the rigors of New England winters had something to do with the sturdy New England conscience. But the Pilgrims brought their consciences with them, and the climate came near exterminating the colony. If the Pilgrims had landed in Cuba and the Spanish in Boston, civilization might be very different to-day. If rigorous climates produce vigorous men, how is it that some of the most terrible of men sailed the Caribbean sea and devastated the whole mid-American world, while the northern coasts of the Atlantic never saw a pirate's sail? The tropical zephyrs of the Bay of Panama never softened the tempers or dispositions of the bloodthirsty men who came near exterminating whole populations and left a trail of blood and terror behind them. And these same unconscionable scoundrels used to attend mass and plant wooden crosses wherever they went.

The effort to account for South American civ-

ilization by climate falls to pieces before the splendid and bracing altitudes of the Andes, the ideal conditions of Argentine, Uruguay, and Chile, and the delightful regions of the higher elevations of Central America. There is nothing inherently demoralizing in the climate of lands inhabited by the Latin peoples in America, but there is something distinctly vitiating in the moral miasma breathed by these peoples for three hundred years. If cold climates produced inflexible consciences, the Eskimos ought to be the most conscientious people on earth. But the moral climate of Jesuitism has produced a uniform effect everywhere that it has supplied the soil for soul-growth.



FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

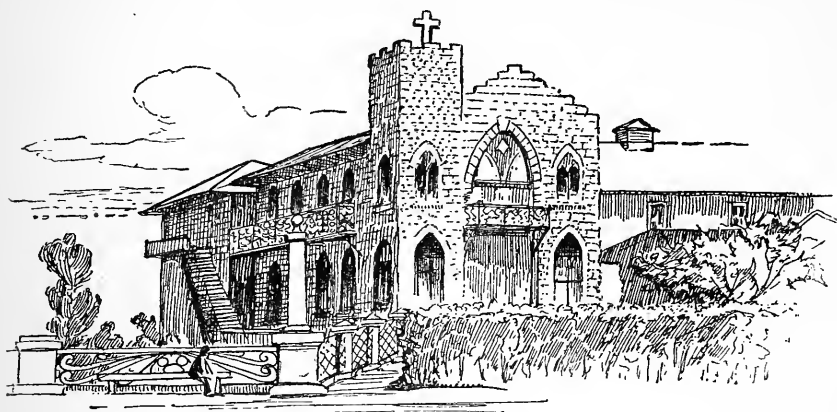
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It is impossible to grow liberty of life, apart from its natural soil and necessary nourishment. If we are to have free institutions, we must first have free men. We cannot have a stream of water without a flowing fountain, nor ripe fruit without a living tree. Political liberty is impossible without moral freedom, and it is idle to expect independence of political action without the established right to think for oneself. When consciences are forced into fixed and prescribed molds it is useless to ask that men turn about and practice the principles of a free democracy. Majority rule is meaningless where the confessional dominates the consciences of men. If we apply these factors in the social history and life of the Latin-American to the traits of his development most subject to criticism, we find much illumination. Out of all the discussion three items emerge, each significant and each closely related to the factors just mentioned.

The Latin mind is given to an idealism that reaches out for large things but often stops short of large actual realization. Out of this tendency grow weak initiative and superficial standards. As evidence of this characteristic may be cited the tendency in education to stress the superficial and showy features of the curriculum, leaving in the background the foundations and essentials of the intellectual life. Anything that makes a good

appearance is given place over the less spectacular realities. In architecture, a florid ornamentation is achieved, even at the expense of good plaster and proper surface stone, later with the resultant unsightliness.

Deductive processes of thought are much in evidence. In outlining a plan of provincial government, or a system of national education, the



SEAWALL CHURCH AND SCHOOL, PANAMA

paper plans will include every needed feature of a complete and theoretical system, without much regard for the local needs and actual conditions under which the full scheme is to be realized, which in all probability it will never be. To have projected and announced a grand undertaking in any department of human life is as important as to have accomplished something. It is the grand-piano constitution and the one-finger administration. It is not hard to find automobile undertakings and wheelbarrow accomplishments.

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Now, all this is not cause for railing accusation but for thoughtful analysis. And the dominant cause is not far to seek. Where effort to translate ideals into realities is met by a barrier of official indifference, it is not strange if men give their time to dreaming rather than actualizing their visions. Where belief and conduct are prescribed and commercialism dominates the moral lives of men, it is easy to see that initiative is crippled at its source. Where a people is divested of responsibility for the final outcome and taught to pay the price and "believe or be damned," it is a rash spirit that will try to do more than dream dreams and write books and project utopias. Without the incentive of encouragement to produce practical results, no real efficiency has ever appeared among any people. There are accusations of moral duplicity among Latin-American peoples. More serious and fundamental than impotent idealism, this defect registers itself in perversion of public trust, in the degradation of public office to the uses of private gain, in deception, graft, and greed. Promises are easy, but performances are delayed until the would-be enterprising citizen gives up in despair.

In regard to this two things are to be said. In the first place, our own records as a people will not bear any too close inspection. Aside from race riots and labor disturbances, our Civil War furnishes our only revolution, except the one

that produced the original United States. But when it comes to political prostitution of public office and the invention of grafting schemes, large and small, our own history does not give us much ground for boasting. And many a "revolution" has caused less bloodshed than a North American labor row.

Further, so far as there is a difference between the conduct of the North and South, the explanation is not far to seek. Once admit the validity of the principle that it is right to do wrong for a good end, and a whole stream of moral duplicity is turned loose in public and private life. Jesuitism will account for almost any moral lapse in a land where all thinking has come under the spell of a creed in which the end justifies the means.

Let this principle be ever so carefully guarded and proscribed, so long as human nature remains what it is, where personal interests are at stake the individual is going to be his own final judge of the value of the end for which the means are devised. And on the basis of every man adapting means to his own ends we have moral chaos.

Much has been said of the personal immorality



MANDY DID HER  
SHARE



THE CANAL DIGGER

of many people of these southern lands. That the Latin-American is in any whit behind his northern neighbor in the integrity of his personal and domestic life remains to be proven. That his deflections from the straight and narrow path are much less concealed and by him are regarded as of small account is to be conceded. Here, again, the cause is not far to seek. With a sacerdotal example loose and irresponsible, it would be strange indeed if the men of South America showed a higher personal chastity than their spiritual leaders and moral guides.

The third accusation brought against our neighbors is that of political undemocracy. Government by revolution is said to be the rule, and an election in which the "outs" win a victory over the "ins" is practically unknown. Victorious majorities are governed in size only by the discretion of the dominant power, and the Latin mind seems a stranger to the fundamental principle of accepting a majority decision as binding until the next election.

To accept gracefully a majority decision against himself or his party is an art slowly acquired by any politician. On the playgrounds we see this trait; in amateur clubs and literary societies we find it; in the arena of political strife it does its worst and results in a state of affairs in which revolution becomes the general substitute for elections.

I stood one day on the campus of a Christian college in a Latin republic. The young men were playing baseball, and they were playing it well. I discovered that baseball was a regular part of their curriculum, that they were required to play so many games per week, and that they received credit for the games, provided they were played according to rules. When I inquired as to the reason for this I was informed by the efficient director of the school that baseball was in his opinion one of the most important subjects in the course. "There are two things that we can teach through baseball better than any other way. One is teamwork—a fellow can't play the game alone; and the other is the art of accepting defeat gracefully. Half of the boys must be defeated every day, which is an invaluable drill for them."

Even as we discussed the matter, a tall fellow got into a dispute with the umpire, and after a dramatic flourish swung his arms in the air and shouted, "No juego mas" ("I will play no more").



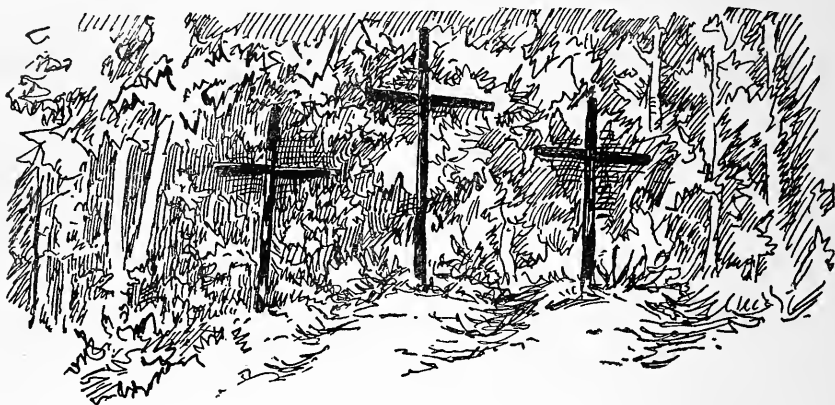
THE TOWN PUMP, IN-  
TERIOR VILLAGE

## 176 PROWLING ABOUT PANAMA

"There—do you hear that?" remarked the director. "That is what we are trying to cure."

As far as my observation has gone, nobody except the educational missionary is trying very hard to cure this most unfortunate trait in an otherwise very fine character.

Here, again, it is not difficult to trace this stream to its sources. We understand much



WAYSIDE CEMETERY IN THE JUNGLE

better since 1914 whence came this political peculiarity. The ideals of European politics have been transferred across the Atlantic and their fruits on foreign soil have not been tempered by the vigor of free institutions grown strong in the processes of centuries. If Central-American republics are only constitutional monarchies in which the monarch governs the constitution, there is very good reason for the anomaly. If it is true that there is not a single republic on American

soil south of "the line," then it is to be said that there never can be such a republic until Latin-America ceases to think in terms of European history and Jesuitism is broken from its hold on the moral consciousness of the men who make and unmake republics in the Latin world. Successful republics have been developed in that turbulent but onmoving stream of Western and modern ideals that has found its most complete expression in the United States, but which has also tintured the thinking and influenced the political processes of practically every country on earth except Prussia. We ourselves are not perfect yet, and it behooves us to withhold the stones from our neighbors until we can show a clean record. We will have some distance to go before democracy is a finished product, and it will be a good plan to take the neighbors along with us.

## CHAPTER XII

### LATIN-AMERICAN HEART

MUCH misunderstanding has been due to faulty methods of approach to our southern neighbor. Political diplomacy, commercial competition, and military displays will never get to the core of this international apple. The Latin-American is a man of heart, and until we recognize this fact we shall fail to understand him. Sympathy and courtesy will avail more than battleships and boycotts. This man is a born diplomat and has high intellectual development, but the deep and dominant motives of his life are his friendships and affections.

If we know the ruling motives of men and races, we may avoid nearly all the misunderstandings and incriminating accusations that arise when we occupy different points of view, but matters look very different when we get at them from the viewpoint of the other man.

Seeming contradictions dissolve and weaknesses appear as unsuccessful aspirations. Our complaints of low initiative become more reserved when we remember that spiritual slavery is a certain antidote for the pioneering spirit. The presence of a high though fruitless idealism amid

insurmountable difficulties attests a virile and buoyant spirit, captive and caged. Where toil has been treated with contempt for ages nothing short of economic helplessness can follow.

As for financial faithlessness, who shall throw the first stone? If once we begin to justify the means by the end, commercial life is going to suffer. If we begin to complain about the insecurity of political institutions, we need to remember that democracy is one of the first and finest fruits of a free mind and heart. And we have not yet ourselves arrived sufficiently to do any boasting.

To know our Latin-Americans as personal friends is to attain a new viewpoint on the whole Pan-American problem. We may not blind our eyes to their defects more than to our own—there are plenty of both; but understanding brings explanation of many things, and if we know all and understand fully, we may come to a different verdict. The southern man far surpasses us in certain traits of which we have taken small account and in which we are racially deficient. When given free opportunity, satisfactory response appears to the stimuli of democracy and initiative.

To know personally the Spanish-American is to become aware of his keen intuitions, his high personal charm, his strong sympathies, his constructive imagination, and his hearty idealism; and whatever else he may be, he is loyal to his



friends and their interests. He may not be so intent on doing something, but he has time for social graces and arts, and possesses an innate refinement and grace of character that we take pride in having neglected.

The Latin at his best is the racial goal of South America. Who cares to be judged by the social leavings of his own country? The South American best is intelligent, refined, and faithful to trusts. His mental processes are touched with a constructive imagination that finds high expression in his abundant art and literature. With a nervous, artistic, and sensitive temperament, he responds quickly to friendly ap-

proaches and stands ready to do his full share in social obligations.

That peons and ignorantes are not thus described is only to say that the tramps and social unacceptables of any country are not to be classed with the intellectuals and social leaders.

The personal equation is apt to be decisive in South America. Commercial travelers learn this to their profit or loss, as they adopt or disdain the ruling motives of the men with whom they deal. It may do very well in some cities of the United States for the breezy commercial traveler to display his samples, deliver his oration, and give the merchant three minutes to take or leave the best goods on earth. Such methods in Spanish countries means no business at all. Selling goods in South America is a social function in which are involved members of the family and, incidentally, some very pleasant hours. Any sort of make-believe is useless. Unless a man really likes the people he had better abandon any plans to do business with them. He may get on in Chicago, but in Bogota he will be very lonesome.

When a man sells goods on talk he may dispose of inferior qualities occasionally, and trust that he can talk enough faster next time to make up for his loss of standing; but when goods are sold on friendship a single mistake in quality means ruptured relations and the end of commercial confidence. And where friendship furnishes the

basis of business the buyer will protect the seller in return for uniform good treatment on his part. Like all other racial customs, when once it is understood the system is not so unreasonable as at first appears.

An Englishman traveling in South America told me that on one occasion he sold a large bill of goods on credit to a man who proved to be a rascal. As the time for the return of the salesman and the payment for the goods drew near the buyer tried to sell out his entire stock at half price, with the intention of leaving the country with the money. But all the other merchants were friends of the salesman and refused to take advantage of the situation, to the loss of their friend. They preferred to lose their own profits.

Business in Latin-America is a personal matter. If a deal goes wrong, somebody is responsible. North American business has a large impersonal element, and the man who makes a bad bargain usually feels that he had himself largely to blame. The joke is on him, and he will exercise more shrewdness next time. But the southern merchant views the case differently, and it behooves the salesman to handle only goods that will move to the profit of the buyer.

When once this basis of friendly confidence is well set up it is easy to consummate large transactions with very little preliminary investigation. The capitalist is more interested in knowing what

his trusted friend thinks than in getting data upon which to base his own conclusions.

National ambassadors and Christian missionaries soon learn what the business man found out long ago: that there is only one road to successful relations with these people and that is the way of the heart. Neither minister nor missionary nor



BOILING "DULCE"—CRUDE SUGAR

merchant can succeed unless he genuinely likes the people with whom he is dealing. Any missionary who is afflicted with a sense of superiority had better look up the sailing dates of any steamer line connecting with the United States.

In meeting strangers the right kind of a letter of introduction has high value. Let the letter be from a personal friend, and the homes and hearts are opened in a way that surprises the more coldly

formal man from the north. It is a cheering and heartening experience to present a good letter to a fine family and be received with a cordiality and genuine hospitality that leaves no doubt as to the honest motives of the hosts.

But how are we to find the road to the heart of any people unless we can speak to them in their own tongue in which they were born? The interpreter does very well for trivial and formal matters, but who wants to use an interpreter in his own family? Here is where the "United Stateser" gets into trouble. As a linguist he does not shine; in fact, he is barely visible in a good light. He considers it beneath him to take the trouble to learn anyone's language. Why should he? He can speak English already. If anyone has anything to say to him, let him say it in English; and if he cannot speak English, then surely he can have nothing worth saying. It is a ready formula, but it fails to reach the hearts of men who do not happen to have been born in the United States.

The Latin is a better linguist than his neighbor to the north. Nearly all the better class people speak some English, though they are very modest about the matter. Practically all of them speak two or more languages. But even if they do surpass us in speech and can use some English, we are not excused from acquiring a working knowledge of the language of the people with

whom we are to deal. The increasing development of Spanish teaching in North American schools is one of the most helpful signs of the times.

Nowhere does the innate courtesy of the Latin-American shine more than in his bearing toward the novice who tries to learn his language. We of the United States are wont to laugh at the linguistic struggles of the stranger within our gates, but not so with the South American. He is a gentleman, and will take immense pains to assist anyone who makes an effort to talk to him. He seems to regard it as a compliment that anyone should try to use his language. Any faltering effort will receive immediate encouragement.

A volume could be written about the comical blunders of North American tyros in language learning. A hundred or two garbled words, vigorous guessing and violent arm action make up the linguistic equipment of some would-be "interpreters." Mixed English, Spanish, jerks, and profanity will do wonders where there is nothing else, but as substitutes for language they are far from ideal. Classic is the story of one of these interpreters who struggled in vain to deliver the meaning of his friend to a native, and at last gave up in disgust, regretting that he "ever learned the blamed language anyway."

Spanish is possibly as easy to learn as any language other than that of one's native land. Aside

from its complicated verb and annoying gender, it has few difficulties that need cause acute distress. But the score of "easy methods" without teachers are to be avoided. There is no easy way to learn a language. It takes work, hard work, and a lot of it to learn a second language. But it can be done, and to acquire a new medium of expression, even in middle life, is an experience not to be taken lightly. It is above all things interesting. It comes at last to this: the only way to speak, write, or read Spanish effectively is to learn it. Short cuts bring short results.

And the only road to a worthwhile understanding of the Latin-American is that of a sympathetic personal acquaintance and genuine friendship. It is a matter of heart more than of head, and unless the North American has a heart himself he had better acquire one or abandon his efforts to deal with the Latin-American.

To the traveler from the Orient Latin-America is easy to know. There is much in Spanish ceremonial, love of life and color and rhythm, the innate chivalry and politeness, so often absent from the direct processes of the North American, to suggest the peculiar charm of the Orient at its best. The ornateness of architecture appears in the East and West in nearly equal measure. When it comes to elaborate speeches and flattering expressions, not even the honorifics of ceremonial Japan have much advantage over the gra-

cious and complimentary extravagances of the Spanish-American.

It was at a school entertainment that the director, who spoke excellent Spanish, was unavoidably absent, and the writer was pressed into service at the last moment to explain some stereopticon views and make a few announcements. The language was that of a tyro and must have afforded material for much amusement to the cultured parents of the school children. But no one laughed, and as a reporter for a Spanish paper chanced to be on hand, the morning edition stated that the entertainment was a high success and that the views were described in the choicest of classic Spanish while the announcements were delivered with a diction of the purest and highest type. It was the conventional manner of describing any public event.

This temperament leads to oratory as rivers run to the sea. Given a few ideas for a start, and any educated Latin will deliver an extempore oration that suggests weeks of careful preparation. Rounded periods and classic expression mark every polished phrase.

Probably the most perplexing and annoying thing about the North American in the eyes of his southern neighbor is our incessant hurry and rush. We may be millionaires in money but we are hopelessly bankrupt in time. And the South American is both millionaire and philanthropist

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in time. He always has a surplus and is willing to use it—and his friend's too. Some of our hurrying about is regarded as a great joke. Clayton Sedgwick Cooper quotes a Bengalese of Calcutta as regarding a certain Englishman as "one of the uncomfortable works of God." Such are we of the United States in the eyes of our southern friends.

The formalities of social life are of vast importance to the Panamanian, and they are also important to the North American who wishes to transact any sort of business with officials and educated men of any class. Dress suits and high hats are not to be despised if one is to get on in the capital city. Neither are business and politics to be separated if any business is to be done.

During 1918 the death of President Valdez within a month of the constitutional date of the national election created a situation in which the election board was controlled by one political party and the police department by the other, spelling inevitable trouble. Military authorities on the Canal Zone took a hand and sent over a troop of cavalry to police the city during the election week. At sight of the soldiers panic possessed many women and children, who had been told that the Americans, if they came, would shoot down all persons on the street without warning. A few hours convinced the populace of the error of this widely circulated report, and the

election passed peacefully, the party in office winning.

Panamanian officials are uniformly courteous, kindly, and will go to any reasonable length to grant any proper request, especially if it comes from a friend. I have called on various men in high authority many times on diverse matters and have never failed to be received cordially and given the best of personal treatment. It has occasionally happened, however, that after leaving the official I tried to recall just what he had stated or agreed to do, and had difficulty in finding anything definite.

Perhaps Latin character reaches its highest level in family life. The women of the Latin race are noted for natural grace and comeliness, and in their own homes they give themselves to their husbands and children with a devotion to which some of the club women of northern lands are strangers, as well



WASHING BY THE RIVER

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as their families. Motherhood is a high calling before which all else must give way. The open life of the northern family, with its easy conventions and free hospitality, is largely unknown, but a close and intimate family life is built up essentially stronger in some features than anything found further north. The Spanish home is a very select and secluded affair, into the charmed circle of which only the most intimate friends may enter.

This wife and mother usually knows nothing of her husband's affairs, and has little freedom of the streets or public places. There is none of that comradeship in business interests often found in the States between husband and wife.

The señoritas, or young women, of these homes are decidedly feminine. They make much of cosmetics, but they do at least spare us the assorted colors of the hair dyer's art. And they do not make a holy show of themselves on the street, with loud manners and conspicuous costumes, as if to attract attention of all passers-by. It must be said that some of the better class young women of these countries are "stunning lookers," and are always attractive and well bred, but with limited educational advantages they are apt to be shallow conversationalists. Many of the men prefer them that way. For a woman to know too much about business and politics detracts from her distinctly feminine charm in the eyes of these

Spanish men. What religious devotion exists in these countries is found among the women, who usually go regularly to mass and confession.

Strictest chaperonage is maintained over young women, no girl being permitted for a moment to be alone with a young man, a system that would make slow headway in North America. And the women are long suffering with their husbands, from whom they endure conduct that would break up almost any North American home.

The Panamanian woman has none of the boldness of the new woman of Argentine, nor the ultra-timidity of Peruvian seclusion. She knows the value of balconies and lace shawls and effective coiffures, and it must be said that in spite of rigorous supervision and never-failing modesty of demeanor, she has a charm and a "come-hither" in her eye that has won the heart of many a North American.

The possibilities of the Latin race are perhaps best measured by the occasional rare characters that break through the bonds of convention and precedent and attain an altitude of gracious nobility unsurpassed anywhere on earth. Occasional products of missionary schools show results in character and efficiency that indicate clearly the latent capacity for a something in which the brusque Saxon is too often deficient.

The "Christ of the Andes" was set up on the

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boundary line between Argentine and Chile as a suggestion of the only basis of permanent peace in the life and teachings of the Prince of Peace. This famous statue was the result of the work of a woman, the Señora de Costa, president of the Christian Mothers' League of Buenos Ayres. Cast of old Spanish cannon, and installed in its lofty elevation of thirteen thousand feet in the Andes, the monument was dedicated March 13, 1914, as much a memorial to the work of a Latin-American woman as a testimonial to the peaceful intentions of the two nations.

There is a Spanish word, not exactly translatable into English, which may be taken as the key to Latin character at its best. It is the word "simpático," which means something more than "sympathetic." A man is *simpático* when he is gracious and open-hearted and likable and considerate of other folks' feelings. There ought to be a course in *simpático* for every prospective missionary and business man in the United States who has any intention of dealing with the Latin-American.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE CARIBBEAN WORLD

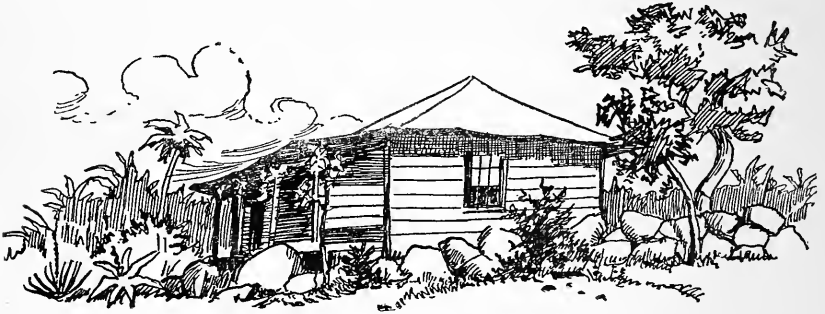
READERS of Robinson Crusoe associate the Caribbean Sea with piracy and rum, but usually have few other ideas on the subject. Most people of the United States have scarcely so much as heard that there be any Caribbean world except that it is somewhere in the tropics.

To be sure, the Caribbean Sea has a way of impressing itself upon those who sail its troubled tides. Perhaps the shades of the villains who used to cross these waters on their murderous expeditions still linger to raise the adverse winds and toss the seasick passenger in his misery. Certain it is that very few travelers have any affection for the seven hundred miles of salt water between the Mosquito Coast and the islands so notorious in the sixteenth century.

It is with something of surprise, then, that the prowler about Panama learns of a homogeneous population living on the chain of islands that begins below Porto Rico and swings downward in a graceful curve to the tip of the South American coast. These Lesser Antilles mark the eastern boundaries of the famous, or *infamous*, Caribbean Sea. Though small in size, their con-

siderable numbers and large populations make them important. If they are not so well known now, at least they have the distinction of having been discovered by Columbus when he set out to find a way to the East Indies and discovered the West Indies instead.

The political complexion of these islands varies greatly. Government is shared by Spain, France, England, and the United States, and the languages spoken conform to the governing



COSTA RICA FARM HOME

power. The purchase of the Danish West Indies has given the United States a permanent and prominent influence in the group.

No account of matters Panamanian could omit reference to the people of this West Indian world. From the beginning of Panama's history Caribbean adventurers have crossed the sea in any craft that would float, and have played a large part in the restless events of the Isthmus. West Indian influence and blood were mingled with the history of the Isthmus for four hundred

years, and in these last days it has been the West Indian who furnished the labor that dug the Panama Canal, and who still contributes the brawn and perspiration for the work of the Canal Zone. Twenty-five thousand of these people live on or near the Zone and are employed by its government, and probably as many more live near by and mingle with the native life of Panama. All through the interior there are always some West Indians.

Without the West Indian the digging of the Canal would not have been impossible, but would have been much more difficult. Chinese coolies would have cost more to import and could hardly have worked for less money. Considering the cost of living on the Canal Zone, the West Indian has furnished some of the cheapest labor in the world. In construction days the nine or ten cents an hour wage was more than the black man had received at home, but his living expenses on the Zone were very much higher than on the Caribbean Islands. The wage scale of the West Indian on the Canal Zone has been revised and increased several times by the American government in an effort to keep pace with the rising cost of living; but it must be said that the laborer's wage of about thirty dollars a month, with from three dollars to six dollars deducted for the rent of two rooms, does not afford a very sumptuous living for a man and his family. The "silver"

man on the Zone pays the same price for his food and clothes as does the "gold" white man who receives twenty-five per cent higher wages than is paid for the same work in the States, and in addition has a furnished apartment or cottage free of rent cost. The men on the "gold" rate complain of the high cost of living. What they would do if reduced to one sixth of their present wages they do not stop to consider. It is not a pleasant subject to face, but it is hoped that the wages of the West Indian may be lifted to the point where he can at least buy food enough to keep him in good physical condition.

The West Indies furnishes the plantation labor of Panama and Costa Rica, without which there would be little plantation work done. In the hot and humid banana groves he endures the temperature and handles the huge banana bunches as though born for the job, as perhaps he is. Out from Almirante and Puerto Limon range the tracks of the plantation railroads through hundreds of miles of banana forests, where the black man supplies the labor for the largest farms in the world. Forty or fifty thousand of these people live on and about the plantations of the Atlantic coast and without them the largest agricultural enterprise ever carried on under one management would collapse.

The West Indian on the Isthmus is not the West Indian at home. He may live and die on

the mainland, but he thinks in terms of the islands from which he came. Like the American Negro, he is of African descent, but his African origin is so remote that no trace of it remains in his consciousness, though it is evident in his psychology. Most of the West Indians about the Canal Zone dream of returning to the islands again.

These people of the Caribbean world have a decided race consciousness, and in their thinking and living are a world unto themselves. Separate and distinct from the Greater Antilles and the mainland, they know very little of the continental life and customs, and any attempt to classify them with American Negroes or Europeans raises a set of social problems difficult to solve.

To the North American



BANANAS THIRTY FEET HIGH

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the mental processes of the West Indian are a psychological jungle in which the explorer is soon lost. Perhaps no one has yet essayed to really understand this man, and those who have tried to analyze him maintain that he does not understand himself. Certain it is that he does not trouble



SAN BLAS INDIANS HAVE  
"POKER FACES"

himself with any self-analysis. He has enough other things to occupy his attention. With the psychological background of his remote African ancestors, his race characteristics have changed very little since the days when his forefathers were forcibly torn from their native land and deported into savage slavery.

The social sanctions of the West Indian are rigid and well established. The list of forbidden things is long and complex, and of signs, and dreams and portents, strange and powerful, there seems no end. Numerous negatives appear in his social and personal creed, and he who violates these prohibitions must be a courageous soul. To introduce any original, new idea into this scheme of things is a difficult task, and is apt to arouse a whole chain of reactions, complex and mysterious. This man will follow literally any able

leadership, but the leader must go in the direction of the established currents of opinion or he will have a hard time of it.

The West Indian has a religious capacity that impresses the visitor as a remarkable aptitude for things sacred. Such, indeed, it is. And the religious life of the earnest and conscientious members of this race exhibits a fine type of devotion and sacrifice. As might be expected, there is free expression of emotional experience, but on the whole those who are truly religious match their songs by their deeds and their testimonies by their lives. Practically nothing is known on the Isthmus of anything bordering on hysteria. When it comes to familiarity with the English Bible the average church member will put to shame his white friend, and in interpretation of scripture some very unique and interesting efforts are produced.

In matters of doctrine most of these people are rigid immersionists. The women invariably wear their hats in church, on the ground that Saint Paul commanded such observance, but they ignore the exhortation of the same apostle that the women keep silence in the churches. All special occasions possess thrilling interest, and almost any West Indian will go hungry to get good clothes. How they manage to dress as well as they do on the incomes they receive is a mystery that has not yet been solved.

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An experienced missionary among these people says that practically every West Indian at some time in his life is a member of some church. If this is true, many of the West Indians in Panama are backsliders, as a majority are not at present showing any interest in Christian observances or moral living. Possibly many of those who are genuinely devout and consistently Christian establish a membership in several different churches, one after the other. Tiring of one church, discontented with the pastor, or encountering personal difficulties with other members, it is easy and convenient to join some other congregation, and of split-ups and break-offs there seems no end. Nearly every church on the Isthmus has had its deflections and divisions, and anything like the modern movement toward unity and cooperation of the Christian program is a *terra incognita* to this enthusiastic individualist.

A surprising thing is the capacity for financial self-sacrifice of the West Indian. Out of the pennies that he receives as wages he contributes liberally to the support of his church and for the education of his children. Nearly all West Indian churches on and near the Canal Zone are self-supporting, and nearly all West Indian schools are maintained from tuition fees. If these people were to receive good wages, they would not only wear good clothes but would contribute to community enterprises and keep their

children in school as long as possible. That the more dissolute members of the community would spend their money for rum is no reason for depriving the laborer of his hire.

Living without adequate means of recreation or possibilities of culture or wide information, life is nevertheless saved from deadly monotony by the exercise of the high gifts of controversy. When it comes to a straight, head-on wrangle the West Indian shines in a glory all his own. Not even a loquacious Oriental can surpass his powers of abuse and lordly contempt for his adversary. If words were bullets, the whole population would perish in twenty-four hours, innocent and guilty together. To the uninitiated bystander it seems that an empire is being lost, but the old-timers cease to heed the quarreling and go their way indifferent to the social safety valve of these



WHERE STYLES MOLEST  
NO MORE

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greatest natural controversialists of the tropic world. A young woman on the train in Costa Rica left her seat to speak to a friend and another girl slipped in next to the window. When the visitor returned the program began. Back and forth flew claims, charges and counter-charges as to the ownership of the seat. With indescribable scorn the usurper said, "Do you want a seat in my lap?" which provoked "Ah, now I see how you was raised."

"Indeed, and you have no manners at all, it is plain to be seen."

Back and forth the duel rages until the first claimant sought another seat, saying, "I certainly does respect myself too highly to sit by the likes of you."

The combat closed thus: "When I look upon you I know what you is, for I can read your face."

All of which falls flat without the wholly inimitable accent of the Jamaican dialect.

This accent of the British subject in the West Indies is a dialect so peculiar that it defies the most skillful impersonators. Somehow only those to the manner born seem able to acquire or imitate the strong combination of London cockney and African rhythm. The more intelligent and better-educated people speak intelligibly, but it is common to hear alleged English that is almost impossible to understand. There is not the slightest resemblance to the traditional dialect of

the Southern Negro, and as for expressing it in cold type there is no alphabet on earth that can represent the sounds and inflections produced.

The West Indian in Panama has a certain economic efficiency on the level to which he has been trained, otherwise he would not have been brought to the Zone by tens of thousands and retained there through the years of Canal construction on into the present period of operation and maintenance. Under a boss this man is faithful and efficient, provided the task assigned him is within the scope of his training and ability. And however slow or inaccurate he may be, he can hardly help earning the wages that he receives. And if he did not work at all, the patience with which he endures the frequent abuse and cursings of the impatient gang bosses ought to be worth something. Certainly, the reader of this would not take what is handed out to the West Indian for ten times his wages. It is true that he is not strong on independent judgment, and that when left to his own counsel he may do some strange things and perhaps very little of anything. But how is a man to develop judgment who has never borne responsibility?

Deep down in the heart of this man is slowly rising a resentment against the economic conditions he finds on the Zone, and in many cases silent and dangerous hate is gradually filling the hearts of the unorganized and helpless "silver"

men. Unless conditions are improved the time may come when this resentment may flare up in a useless and hopeless protest. But it is more likely that the wage scale will be readjusted from time to time and the explosion forestalled. Occasionally some of these people get away to the United States, but none of them ever return. For them the patriarchal Canal Zone offers no attractions compared with the free competition of the States. It is maintained by officials of the Zone that the wage scale is as high as available funds will warrant; that if the West Indian had any more money, it would do him no good, and that the increases in wages already granted have fully kept pace with the rise in the cost of living.

In matters of personal morals the West Indian is accused of loose matrimonial practices. A priest said to me one day that if two commandments—the seventh and eighth—could be omitted from the Ten, the West Indian would get along all right. This slander is not deserved; but investigation into facts reveals that the morals of the West Indians are but little better than those of Panama. Concubinage is widely practiced, with a system of financial support; but no more so than everywhere else in the tropics except on the Canal Zone, where moral conditions are exceptionally good. The remark of the priest may have been due to the fact that most of the West Indians are Protestants.

Some characteristics of rare merit and interest occasionally arise among these people. They do not sing as well as their northern cousins, but they produce orators of no mean ability. Earnest, consistent, faithful, affectionate, and original in expression, the best of these people afford promise of what may be expected when better conditions bring large opportunity.

Like other races not long exposed to civilization, the children of these people show surprising precocity. They give excellent account of themselves in primary schools, and in performances at public entertainments they are letter-perfect. Fifty numbers on a program and never a slip or a failure throughout, and not a complaint or criticism except that it was a little short. One

large church established a record by producing a Christmas program containing one hundred and eight numbers. Through the primary years these youngsters sometimes surpass their white



CHINESE ALWAYS START  
A SCHOOL



"SCHOOLDAYS"

friends, but the economic pressure of living conditions crowds them nearly all out of school at the end of the fourth or fifth grade. Once they get a groundwork in the three "Rs" they are considered well educated for life.

As may be expected, the birth rate is high, but large families are rare because of the distressing and unnecessary high rate of infant mortality. How could it be otherwise when a whole family lives in one room on twenty-five dollars a month with food at New York prices?

That the Jamaicans are a gregarious folk is to be expected. The social instinct is always strong in any people of African descent. Canal Zone bosses complain that their employees prefer to leave the clean and sanitary quarters of the Zone and live in the Guachapali and San Miguel districts of Panama and in Colon, where they are crowded together in a way that would prove fatal to a white man. The constant company and crowded conditions do not trouble the West Indians, whereas the rigid restrictions of the silver quarters of the Zone he often finds objectionable.

What the West Indian most needs is a fair chance. He is cursed and disparaged on every hand. He is to blame for being ragged and unwashed, but when he goes hungry and dresses up, then he is a hopeless spendthrift and a fraudulent dude. It is useless to pay him fair wages because he would spend the money. Unscrupulous land-

lords are allowed to extort enormous rents for wretched quarters in Panama and Colon, because, if the Jamaican did not spend his money that way, he would pay it out for something else. He is looked down upon as not being highly educated, and it is claimed that the more he knows the worse off he is. No matter what happens he is to blame. If the cholera should appear in Panama, or the Gold Hill should slide into the Canal, the West Indian would be the guilty party. Surely, he is worth his wages merely as a target for the verbal explosions of his boss. Some men would have difficulty in holding their jobs were it not for the timely assistance of this "goat" of the Zone. Living conditions in Caledonia and Guachapali would give the New York East Side something to think about. Rooms ten or twelve feet square are rented out to families who usually stretch a curtain across the middle, sleep huddled together in the rear at night, and live in the front of the "flat" the rest of the time. From some primitive prejudice comes a violent dislike of fresh air, especially at night, when every room is as nearly as possible hermetically sealed. In a tropical temperature no one has yet explained how the inmates live till morning.

Naked children swarm in the streets. At first the visitor is properly shocked, but soon ceases to notice these ebony cherubs. In time, however, one does get tired of it. Along the sidewalks and

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in the doorsteps the evening hours are turned into neighborhood debating societies and wrangling clubs, and between the arguments and disputes, and the always nearby street meeting, there is never a dull moment. That is why they prefer living there to the quiet and monotonous life in the silver town on the Zone.

Religious gatherings on the street are a marked feature of the night life of this part of the city. Torchlights and crowds, vigorous singing and enthusiastic exhortations mark the visible features of the efforts of these earnest persuaders of their neighbors to flee from the wrath to come. If street demonstrations were confined to religious meetings, all might be well. While ever-present canteenas dispense cheap and deadly rum there will always be people who will go hungry and ragged to buy "firewater," and with one or two drinks aboard the West Indian becomes a very talkative and quarrelsome person. Often have I seen sidewalks spattered with blood, and a common sight is that of a couple of policemen leading away a gory victim or culprit.

So scanty is the food ration of these people that the general custom prevails of eating very little during the day and then making a feast at night of whatever food can be secured. The Methodist missionary school in this district established a soup line at noon for the feeding of hungry babies who came to the school without their break-

fast and had nothing at home to eat at noon. Any sort of "learning" under such circumstances was impossible.

Three or four things must be supplied if the West Indian is to rise above his present level. He needs living wages, he needs intelligent and responsible leadership; he needs a better education, and he needs a broader social basis and a wider horizon for his circle of life.

There are a few lawyers and doctors and teachers of this race, and there are a number of preachers, who consider themselves to be the intellectuals, but there is no concert of purpose or plan for progress among these people. Each man is intent upon exalting his own personal prominence, or furthering the interests of the little group to which he belongs. West Indian life at present is segregated into little cliques and rings, represented by churches, lodges, dancing clubs, and other organizations. So far no common cause has united any of these factors in any program of progress. So intent are they upon individual emphasis that any thought of the social whole seems almost impossible. Several efforts have been made to unite in a common program of service the different churches in a given community, but so far small success has attended these worthy plans.

Perhaps more than almost anything else the West Indian needs racial self-respect. He is

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humble enough before his boss, and if well treated is loyal and faithful; but for his own kind he has little appreciation. "I will never work for my own color," boasted a proud cook one day. And one of the most difficult problems of the missionary grows out of the fact that the West Indians generally despise each other. To arouse leadership and stimulate ambition among a people who look down upon themselves is a big task. The individual man will have to get his mind on something besides his effort to exalt himself above all his fellows before any great progress can be made. The fundamental trouble with the West Indian is that he looks up to those whom he considers his superiors and looks down upon everybody else. It seems difficult for him to look across or on a level, and recognize other people as being on the same plane with himself.

The educational equipment of these people needs to be extended beyond the present mere elements of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Some intellectual window into the great world out beyond the Caribbean Sea must be provided if there is to be deliverance from the superstition and iron-bound customs that have held them fast for ten thousand years.

What the West Indian needs is not more vigorous swaying of congregations nor more loudly shouting enthusiasts, but a program of Christian living that will enlarge the boundaries

of life and push back the horizons of interest. Debating societies, reading courses, study clubs, extension lectures, night schools, vocational training, good moving picture programs—all of these will do much to break the spell of the past and introduce new ideas where they will take root and bear harvest. Here is a fertile field for a Christian settlement, but the settlement worker should be a resident of the community. One difficulty with the mission work now conducted is that it is done from the top down, and from the outside in. Any attempt toward higher education will need some endowment. It is a tragedy that these people, out of their wretched poverty, are compelled to pay tuition fees for the meager education that their children receive. Some of the plans now being formulated for a broader work in these communities deserve every encouragement and support.

It is greatly to the credit of the West Indian that he nearly always manages in some way to send his children to school, cost what it may. Considering his opportunities, he does well. If the American people were suddenly asked to pay one or two dollars a month for each child sent to school, there would be educational revolution.

It is the intention of the Canal Zone government to house its employees on the Zone as soon as quarters can be provided, but this will require some time. As all "silver" employees are charged

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a monthly rent for these quarters, the project is a business matter for the Zone. Twelve families are usually quartered in one two-story house, two



THREE IN A ROW



MOTHER, HOME, AND—  
THE SIMPLE LIFE

rooms and a porch section to the family, with two wash rooms and sanitary quarters for the whole house. At five dollars per month rent for each family, the house yields an income of eight hundred and forty dollars per year. In a building of about the same size four white families would be quartered rent free.

There is abundant opportunity in the Republic of Panama for the organization of agricultural colonization schemes. Good land is plentiful. Families could be placed on the land without much housing expense, and if food could be supplied them for a few months, self-support would soon be es-

tablished. Some philanthropist might render valuable service and open up new opportunities for a large number of these people by placing them out on the land where each family could

have its own house and where better conditions prevail. A colony of one thousand souls grouped about a central church and school and store would afford new hope and better living to these dwellers in the crowded tenements.

What may be the future of the West Indian on the Isthmus is not yet clearly established, and the Canal Zone authorities have heretofore regarded the "silver" men as more of a temporary necessity than permanent residents. As industrial conditions on the Zone become more stable, however, it appears that there always will be needed a large labor force with a minimum of about twenty thousand people; and unless some new factor appears or is imported, the West Indian is going to supply this labor demand for years to come. This being the case, the laborer is worthy of his hire and should be paid a fair wage for what he does. And the missionaries and social workers who are interested in the welfare of these people need a coordinated and unified program of religious and educational advance. So long as the present disjointed and unconnected methods are followed, scattering and sometimes inharmonious results will appear.

So long as there is work for a laborer in Panama, so long the Caribbean man will be found here in such numbers as may be needed, and so long as he is here he at least deserves good treatment.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE PANAMA CANAL

PROBABLY most pilgrims to Panama think of the Canal as the outstanding feature of the American tropics, and in one way such it is. The traveler will probably want to see the Canal first, and he will find it well worthy of preferential position.

The story of construction days and engineering problems has been ably told elsewhere and does not belong here. Every intelligent traveler will secure some good account of the work and read it as something that every man should know. It is the romance de luxe of engineering achievement. The author of the Arabian Nights Tales would have dug the Canal by the sweep of a wand, or the rubbing of an old lamp, but the American method is vastly more interesting and is much more likely to remain in working order. Aladdin's engineering feats had a way of failing to stay put, if the wrong man got hold of the lamp, but the present Canal shows no signs of disappearing overnight.

Before war conditions put a wall around everything, seeing the Canal was one of the pleasantest and easiest of touring tasks. All was in

plain view, or could readily be found by asking, and most of the men on duty thought it a pleasure to answer questions. Of camera fiends and sketchers and notebook makers there were aplenty. But the war stopped all that for a time. Anybody could look at the Canal from almost any point along its survey, but the locks and docks were strictly private affairs. There are statistics in abundance to be had for the asking concerning the Big Ditch. Experts take pleasure in supplying us with entertainment by compiling and translating figures into interesting statements. For instance, enough excavating was done on the Canal to dig a tunnel fourteen feet in diameter through the center of the earth, eight thousand miles of boring. It takes a little time to comprehend the meaning of a tunnel from Valparaiso, Chile, to Peking, China, or straight through from the north pole to the southern tip of the world.

Enough concrete was used to build a wall four feet thick and twenty-five feet high clear around the State of Delaware. Probably by walking the two hundred and sixty-six miles represented by this wall, one might understand the amount of concrete involved in the Canal construction.

The enormous size of the locks can only be understood by walking their length through the underground tunnels and passageways in which

is located the marvelous machinery of their operation. To stand on the floor of a dry lock and look up at a lock gate eighty feet high, seven feet thick and sixty-five feet wide is an impressive experience, but to see a pair of such gates swing open and shut at the touch of the finger is something to be remembered. The emergency dams look like a steel girder bridge, which, indeed, they are, and provide against accidents by as ingenious a piece of mechanism as the entire system affords. Enormous iron chains with hydraulic springs are stretched across the entrance to the locks to stop any reckless ship which might otherwise strike the gates. The Gatun Dam alone may be classed as one of the world's greatest achievements.

The builders of the Canal may be pardoned for taking pride in the fact that the entire construction cost, down to the present day—three years after the opening of the Canal—is still within the original estimate of \$375,000,000, which figure included the \$40,000,000 paid to the French for the work of the earlier construction. This means that the cost of the Canal was a little less than four dollars apiece for every inhabitant of the United States. The national prestige alone gained by the successful completion of the work has repaid this four-dollar investment many times over. Before the European war \$400,000,000 seemed like a good deal of money. To-day we think of it as a very small sum.

It is easy to find numerous compilations of figures which astonish and perplex us, even though they do help us to understand the magnitude of the work. And nothing is more disappointing than to try to understand the Canal by looking at it from any point along the bank. You can't see the Canal for the water! It is no different from a great Western irrigating ditch and



CONSTRUCTION DAYS IN CULEBRA-GAILLARD CUT

looks like any quiet river. There are no marks of effort or strain anywhere, and when one looks about on the verdant and peaceful landscape he half believes that the tales of the stirring times back in construction days must have been dreams.

Culebra Cut looks like the Hudson palisades, and Gatun Lake is like any other beautiful inland sea in a rolling country. The famous Gatun Dam is merely a dyke at the end of the lake and

the marvelous spillway is only a picturesque waterfall in the middle of a dam. As for the locks, they are big concrete chambers looking very much like a paved street on top and revealing nothing of the complicated mechanism below; and the germ-proof towns are like any other spotlessly clean villages with screened houses, and show nothing to cause us astonishment.

Any superficial view of the Canal is disappointing. It is like trying to understand a deep mine by looking at the mouth of the shaft. The channel is full of water, the machinery is out of sight, the great achievements of sanitation have been largely removals of materials, microbes, and conditions that have left no trace behind to tell their tale. In one way it is a negative result.

The idea of the Canal across the Isthmus is nearly as old as the discovery of the Isthmus by white men, but it remained for the intrepid builder of the Suez Canal to really undertake in earnest the project of a waterway between the two oceans. DeLesseps was both engineer and promoter and never really understood the size of his project. He had succeeded at Suez, but that was a farmer's ditch beside the Culebra Cut and the Gatun Dam, and the famous engineer was a very old man when he began on the Panama project. The high prestige of his name brought him money on a stock investment basis, and when unprincipled schemers got control of the com-

pany the crash and scandal were immense. De-Lesseps himself became insane as the result of the worry and disgrace and died in a hospital.

The French attempt began on January 1, 1880, with a great deal of oratory and champagne, also the official blessing of the Bishop of Panama, which seems to have been something of a Jonah on the enterprise.

In striking contrast was the beginning of the American work when a few men climbed out of a boat into water waist-deep and began cutting down jungle brush.

The actual construction and excavation work begun on the Isthmus by the French was of a very high order, and much of it was used by the Americans. The two causes which defeated the French were reckless financing at home and tropical diseases on the Isthmus. So bad did the disease conditions become that in the fall months of 1884 fifty-five thousand people died, and in the single month of September, 1885, the total rate reached the high-water mark of one hundred and seventy-seven per thousand of population. The total of lives lost on the enterprise will never be known, but is far greater than that of many wars which have received a conspicuous notice on the historical page. The collapse of the De-Lesseps undertaking was followed by the organization of the New Canal Company, upon which followed a chapter of bargainings and treaties

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and negotiations and bickerings with the object of selling out the rights and holdings of the company to the highest bidder. In all of these the Panama Railroad figured very largely, and the Republic of Colombia kept a watchful eye on the main chance for herself.

The story of President Roosevelt's large part in the American undertaking of the independence of Panama and the organization of the American effort is one of the romances of American history. On November 18, 1903, Washington recognized the new Republic of Panama, and later paid \$10,000,000 for the Canal Zone and entered into a treaty guaranteeing the peace and perpetuity of the Isthmian Republic. Thus ended a half-century of riot and revolution and rebellion which was stated to have included fifty-three revolutions in fifty-seven years. Relations between the early officials on the Canal Zone and the rulers of Panama were not ideal; some of the Americans seemed to have had a real genius for offending the finer sensibilities of the natives.

The beginning of the American attempt is not a chapter of which anybody is very proud. The effort to dig the Canal from Washington under a mass of red tape which tied the hands of the men on the Isthmus proved an impossible undertaking. The President succeeded in effecting a reorganization which helped some, but not until all red tape was cut and Army engineers were put

in charge, was anything like real efficiency obtained. Three great engineers were connected with the work—Wallace, Stevens, and Goethals—and to each of these belongs credit for the very high order of work done. While the man who finished the job bears the outstanding name in connection with the Canal, without exception the engineers who worked under the first two men speak in the highest terms of the work that they accomplished.

No snapshot résumé of the building days, nor tourist instantaneous exposure of visits can reveal, nor appreciate, the big problems that confronted the engineers. It all looks easy enough now, but it was very different then.

Good health on the Canal Zone seems a very simple matter now, and such it is; but when the doctors and sanitary engineers began work it was an exceedingly serious situation that they undertook to cure, and without their work there could be no Canal to-day. The complete elimination of the last case of yellow fever has made entirely harmless the mosquito carriers where they occasionally appear on the Isthmus. The best test of the work of the Sanitary Department is the fact that the Zone and terminal cities have remained clean and that there is no indication of relapse. Before work could begin, a whole system of transportation had to be organized, a steamer line put into operation, and an immense purchasing de-

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partment gotten into working order. Before men could be brought to the Isthmus to do the work some provision had to be made for housing and feeding, and the question of materials, supplies, food, fuel, recreation, and education was no small matter.

To dig the Canal required not only engineers and officials, but an army of common laborers, and the labor question was not easy. The Panamanian might have dug the Canal, but he did not do it; he did not want to do it, and the probability is that he never could have done it. Employers on the Zone refused to hire Panamanians for Canal work.

Chinese coolies might have been imported from Canton or Amoy, but Panama is a long way from southern China and still further from India, and no intelligent man ever seriously proposed importing Hindus. If enough Panamanian Indians could have been found, they might have done the work, but the native Indian is a very uncertain and fragmentary factor of life on the Isthmus.

At this juncture the West Indian filled the breach and supplied the labor for the job. Up to forty-five thousand of them were employed at one time, and with the ebb and flow of the human tide between the Isthmus and the Caribbean Islands several times that number came to the Isthmus. Somebody else *might* have supplied

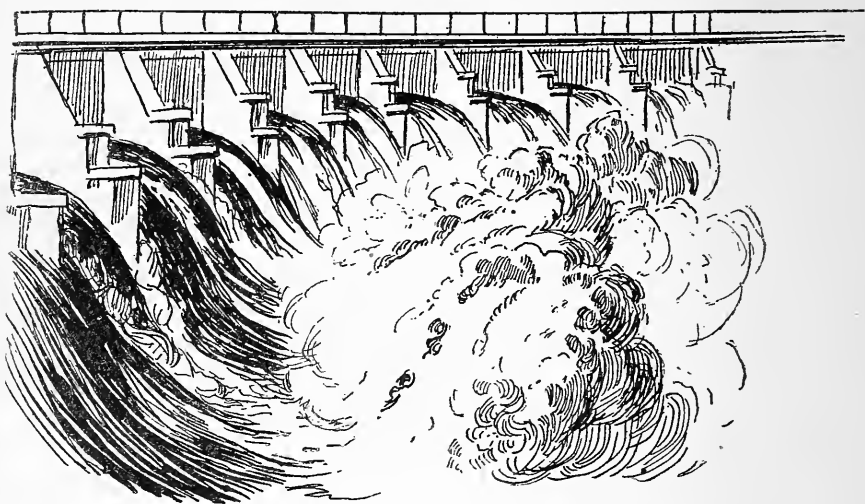
the labor, but the fact is West Indian *did* do the work, and at least deserves proper recognition therefor.

The problems of suitable construction machinery were in a way simple. Given a definite task, it remained to devise mechanical means to meet the conditions. In practice, however, the case was not so simple as this sounds, and some very difficult knots were untangled before the work was well under way. Some of the old French machinery was used clear through the construction period, but the jungle was sown with scrap iron of the old French equipment that has only recently been removed.

The electrical and mechanical equipment for the operation of the locks is a marvel of adaptation and invention and nothing short of a technical description can do the subject justice. To see the locks in operation is to wonder at the mechanical contrivances which seem almost intelligent, and some of the design work is the result of real genius.

Of engineering problems, proper, it is better to let the engineer speak with intelligence, but any layman can stand on Gold Hill and by vigorous use of the imagination see something of the tremendous work that has been done since the first shovelful of earth was turned on that New Year's Day in 1880. Whether the French engineers anticipated landslides at Culebra is not

clear, but the American engineers knew from the start that the porous soil would cave in more or less at that point. What it actually did do surpassed the expectations of those who surveyed the work. When the banks began to cave north of Gold Hill the surrounding country got the idea and followed suit so fast that it looked as though the ten-mile strip would all be needed.



GATUN SPILLWAY, KEY TO THE CANAL

I spent a day in the big cut in January, 1917, and noted the rapid crumble of the historic bank at this troubled point. The following night the channel filled up for a length of eight hundred feet and shipping was suspended. Then the dredgers went at it hammer and tongs, and in three days and nights they had cleared a channel through that enormous mass of material and on the fourth day ships were again passing in safety.

It was a fine illustration of the way dirt was made to fly in the old days.

Some otherwise intelligent people have utterly failed to comprehend the size of the task involved in the mere digging of the Canal. One high official advocated the cure of slides by digging back a mile on each side of the bank. Verily, he knew not what he said, and a member of Congress on visiting the Canal reported that he was still in favor of a sea-level route. Competent engineers assured him that to construct a sea-level canal from ocean to ocean would require at least fifty years of continuous labor. The wisdom of Theodore Roosevelt's ideas has been forever vindicated by experience. Some practical man has said that no man can know how great is the task of making the earth until he tries to move a little of it. The congressman needed a little pick-and-shovel experience.

Administrative problems are not especially acute on the Zone, but the completed task gives room for a world of appreciation of the general efficiency with which the whole work was carried out, and the smooth-running machinery of the executive to-day attests the thoroughness with which the departmental system was organized and initiated by the men whose names will always be associated with the work. The task of operating the Canal to-day would not be very great, nor would it require a very large army of em-

ployees, but without any preconceived plan various related industries to the number of six or seven have grown up about the Canal administration and operation, and the Canal Zone government to-day is doing a number of things never contemplated in the original plans. The routing of ships is directly connected with the coal supply, and a great coaling plant stands at Cristobal. A large cold storage plant makes possible the supplying of refrigerated goods to shipping countries. While the trans-shipping business at Colon is yet in its infancy, the docks there are already a very considerable factor in Canal activities. Sanitation and public health, of course, require a trained force of specialists. The Canal employees must eat, and the commissary hotel and restaurant are a very important branch of the service. The quartermaster looks after the housing problem, and where there are five thousand Americans, most of them living with families, the educational problem necessitates a department by itself. The Balboa Docks employ hundreds of men at high wages.

In connection with the food problem come the large farming operations conducted on the Canal Zone. An army of laborers is employed, and the proceeds of the plantations and poultry yards is sold through the commissary's stores.

From the beginning much attention has been paid to the social life and recreation needs of these

exiles from home. A chain of government club-houses runs across the Isthmus, one in each town, where reading rooms, games, gymnasiums, refreshment counters, discussion clubs, concerts, dances, cigar stores, and motion-picture programs are provided for young and old. During the dry season baseball is widely indulged in and plays an important part in the social and recreational life of the Zone.

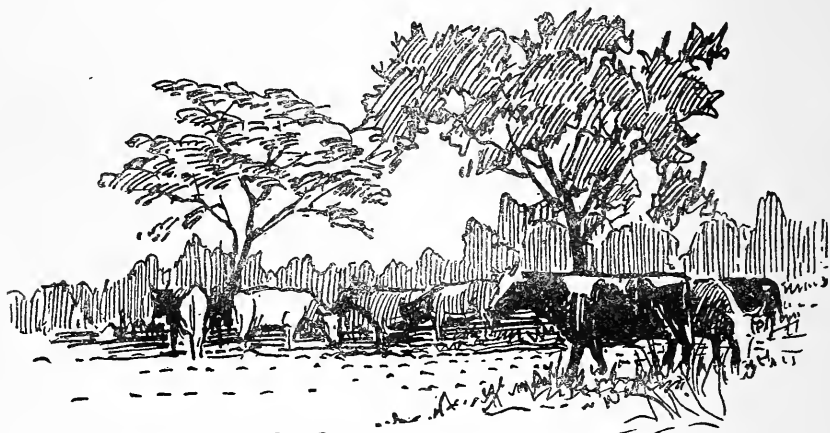
Next to the "spotless town" features of the Zone the visitor is impressed by the smooth-running system through which everything is done. There may be officials who are grouchy and will not take time to answer questions, but I have never met one. The routine of operation and maintenance has succeeded the drive of construction days when Governor Goethals established the famous open house on Sunday morning and received any-



CRISTOBAL STREETS

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body who had anything to say to him. The last black laborer could see the governor if he wished, and many of them did so. The public-be-hanged attitude of occasional small executives in the States is delightfully absent. The machinery of administration outwardly works as smoothly as do the great gates of the locks. On the inner circle there are, of course, problems and sometimes personalities, but they rarely escape from the closets where ghosts are supposed to remain.



FAT CATTLE OF COCLÉ

When the visitor begins to look about and beyond the Canal he becomes aware of the conquered wilderness. Where once was dense and impassable jungle now sweep smooth and verdant hills. One-time fever swamps are now drained meadows, and the never-failing drip from the sanitary oil barrel induces a very high mortality among the mosquitoes. Broad acres of rich

jungle lands have been cleared and are now model farms. Over the grassgrown hills wander thousands of fat cattle, increasing in number every year. The jungle of the Canal Zone is a very tame and conquered jungle. The real article lies beyond the line where there is plenty.

It was once thought that the best thing to do with the jungle was to let it run wild after its kind, as a barrier to invasion. A little experimenting proved that an army could cut its way through the jungle so fast that the brush was nothing more than a screen for the advance of the enemy.

If the visitor stays long enough and gets close enough, he will learn of things which might have been done differently on a second trial, but regulation and adjustment have pretty well cleared up the points in question, and, taking it all through, the Canal is as satisfactory and complete a job as the world has ever seen.

The Americans who live on the Zone are an interesting social experiment without knowing it. They form one of the unique communities of the world. Somebody has said that the Zone situation is described by the word "suburban," but that does not express it. Every man lives in a government-furnished house, rent free. Free also is his electric light and a ration of fuel for cooking. Ice is so cheap that it is practically free. He buys everything that he eats and wears in the

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commissary's stores, where goods are sold to him at cost. So they are—at what they cost *him*. Prices now do not differ materially from retail figures in the States on the same goods. If housekeeping tires, there are the commissary restaurants, clean and wholesome, always available for good meals at reasonable prices. Good schools are furnished free, of course, for the children. There is a free dispensary where all minor ailments are treated and medicine furnished free. The government hospitals are among the best in the world, and employees' rates are less than the cost of living at home. The Zone man is under Civil Service rules, receives a generous vacation, with a steamer rate to New York so low that it covers little more than his meals en route. The scale of his wages is based on an increase of twenty per cent over the pay for the same class of service in the United States. Cheap household service abounds and is about as satisfactory as household service is anywhere. If he is lonesome, the government clubhouse, with its community life, good recreation, and well-stocked reading room, is always open to him practically without cost; and if he gets tired of the Zone, there is always Panama and the interior country with its never-failing places of interest and exploration.

Here are all the advantages of the socialized state and no workingmen or clerks in all the world are so well paid, or taken care of, as these

Americans on the Zone. It is a fine, efficient piece of provision for the men who do the work. Therefore the Zone dweller should be a satisfied and happy man, dreading nothing but the day when he must return to the States.

In practice, however, the American on the Canal Zone is not so contented as the external features of his lot would lead one to suppose. There is an undercurrent of petty complaint, directed at everything in general, and indicative of a state of mind as much as of actual evils exist-



ENCHANTED ISLANDS IN GATUN LAKE

ent. These complaints are the results of too much community life without room for individual ownership or initiative. The followers of Bellamy should come to the Zone and stay long enough to get a few pointers.

The trouble is that there is necessarily much of uniformity of housing, commissary, social, and living conditions. The American people are, after all, strong individualists, and every man

likes to have something that is distinctively his own.

When people work all day together, play ball together till meal time, all eat the same things at the same price from the same store, on exactly similar tables, with identical dishes; when they go to the movies together and walk home down the same street together and sleep in houses and beds all alike, they sometimes develop cases of nerves.

On the testimony of one of the efficient medical men of the Zone a lot of nervousness disappeared when war work absorbed the attention and energies of the patriotic Americans, who enthusiastically devoted their spare time to various forms of win-the-war industry.

The problem of raising children on the Zone is admittedly beset with difficulties. Health conditions are good enough, but many people are prone to regard life on the Zone as a general vacation from the standards and disciplines of the homeland, and children are often allowed to do very much as they please. Many families employ a servant, and there is no economic need for children doing any useful act of work. An unusual degree of irresponsibility results. "It will be time enough to correct them when we get back to the States," is a common remark.

Of course there are many families where the highest ideals are earnestly maintained, and no more faithful fathers and mothers may be found

anywhere than here in this colony of voluntary exiles. But American life on the Canal Zone is at present apt to be regarded more as a vacation experience than as a serious attempt to face the whole problem of living.

Moral and religious safeguards are not absent. The early plan of providing government-paid chaplains ended with construction days, and under the leadership of a group of farsighted laymen the Union Church of the Canal Zone was organized in February, 1914. All Protestant denominations except two now cooperate with this piece of ecclesiastical statesmanship. A centralized organization maintains work in all the civilian "gold" towns along the Canal, employing four pastors, who must be ordained men of evangelical churches. This Union Church does not regard itself as a denomination but as a federation for Christian service. No attempt is made to establish a doctrinal position, and members are not asked to sever their relations with their home churches. The excellent results attained under this management speak volumes for the wisdom of the plan and the earnestness and ability of the men who have fostered the enterprise from the start. The Union Church has devoted its benevolent moneys to opening a mission station at David in Western Panama, in cooperation with the Panama Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

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Morally, the Canal Zone is as clean as any place on earth. The improvement of moral conditions in Colon and Panama has done much to make the lives of Americans wholesome and to decrease the dangers to childhood that have existed in the past. There will always be Americans on the Canal Zone, and a few of them will exercise the great American prerogative of speaking their minds, but most of them will be better off here than at any other time in their lives.

## CHAPTER XV

### PROWLING INTO THE FUTURE

MANY prophets have taken in hand to tell us what the Panama Canal is to bring forth in its commercial, social, political, geographical, and educational results for the world. Probably no world-event has ever had so much advance advertising as this much written-up achievement. Great as is the Canal, it came near being outshone in brilliancy by the publicity material sent out by journalists who found the subject to be profitable copy.

In the main, the prophets were right. The world war postponed the arrival of some of the promised results, but it also enlarged the importance of the Canal and assured more extensive and far-reaching effects than could have been prophesied before the war began. It is now certain that we are to have a new and more closely united America than was formerly possible, and that the drawing together of the two Americas has been greatly accelerated by the world vindication of democracy. In this closer brotherhood of all Americans the Canal will play a large and important part.

Just how far the stream of influences will flow

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cannot be told, but it is within the moderate possibilities to say that every country in the world will be affected by the changes due to the new waterway. The French originators of the first project saw an opportunity for commercial investment and hoped to make good dividends from the venture. They did not much concern themselves with by-products. The Americans who planned and pushed and persevered until the work was again begun were thinking of commercial and naval results, evident enough, but they could not have foreseen the far consequences to follow, nor could they have known that on the Canal Zone five or six related industries were to spring up under management of the Canal Commission. It is now about as difficult to predict the world-wide effects of the Canal factor as it would have been in 1903 to foresee the related industries of the present situation.

Shortening of trade routes is the first and obvious consideration. Everything else grows out of the elimination of distances by the Canal cut-off. It requires no prophetic gift to take the figures from any good map and ascertain that from New York to San Francisco via Magellan is 13,135 miles, whereas via Panama it is 5,262—a saving of 7,873 miles, or a month of steady steaming. Between New York and Honolulu there is a saving of 6,610 miles; and Yokohama is 2,768 miles nearer New York via Panama than by the Suez

route. The list of distances saved may be indefinitely extended.

If there were no results other than the saving of a week or a month of steamer time, the Canal would be cheap at several times its price. But these changes in steamer schedules and prices introduce an entirely new set of reactions into the commercial and social world, and this is where the interesting problems arise. Left to herself, nature tends to establish a balance of flora or fauna in any locality. Introduce a new plant or animal or microbe and all sorts of readjustments begin at once, and before a new balance is established almost anything may happen. Commerce finds its level in much the same way and by the same law. Introduce a radical disturbance, like the Panama short-cut, and everything begins to happen. Add the direct and indirect results of the war with its weakening of German influence and strengthening of



PANAMA PUBLIC WATER WORKS,  
INTERIOR COUNTRY

inter-American interests, and we may have practically a new world before a new balance is established.

Commercial interests naturally forge to the front in any discussion of canal results. So ably have these matters been discussed by experts that any repetition of figures and industries here would be beyond the scope of this work.

It must be understood that the world war rendered obsolete our former ideas regarding trade between the United States and Spanish-America. Whether the extensive German political-commercial machine that covered all Latin-America can regain its prestige in fifty years to come remains to be seen, but it is certain that for a generation following the defeat of Germany by the free nations of the world North America will have a magnificent opportunity to enter South American trade on very advantageous terms. And the great bulk of the west-coast trade will pass through the Canal on its way to Gulf and Atlantic ports, as well as to Europe.

The completion of the Panama Canal may be set down as the date of the discovery of Latin-America by the people of the United States. Previous to that date the North Americans were aware enough of the Monroe Doctrine, but almost unaware of the lives and interests of the nations living south of the Rio Grande River. With the opening of the Canal the North Amer-

icans began thinking south, and so far as the process has gone it has been very informing. Once the war is out of the way, the process will be greatly accelerated. With uninterrupted commercial conditions, five years of the expanded life due to the Canal will be about equal to sending the whole people back to school for a year. The cultural and geographical values of this new zone of thinking have hardly been felt as yet, but now that the attention of the world is released from the battlefields of Europe and the enormous social and financial problems arising from the expense of making the world decent once for all, the tide of interest is again turning southward along the shores of our own great oceans to the mighty events that await us there.

Spanish-America has twelve republics and eight thousand miles of coast line on the Pacific ocean. The United States has a Pacific Coast of about fifteen hundred miles. The eight thousand miles marks the western boundaries of lands enormously rich in things that the world needs, but exceedingly poor in finished products or adequate growth. Probably no country on earth shows a wider margin to-day between present raw resources and possible high developments than these same twelve Spanish-speaking countries. The only analogy that bears on the case is that of the rapid and extensive advancement of the Pacific States after the completion of the

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transcontinental railroads. There is reason to believe that a similar record of progress awaits the west coast of South America.

The combined foreign trade of the west-coast republics before the war reached the very respectable total of nearly one billion of gold dollars in a single year. There are commercial prophets who believe that within ten years from the completion of demobilization this volume of trade may be doubled. This means new markets, new industries, new development of mines, markets, manufactures, and agriculture, new colonization projects and a score of other unpredictable results. No less an authority than Mr. John L. Barrett says, "I believe that the Panama Canal will initiate in all South American countries a genuine movement which will have a most important bearing on the commerce and civilization of the world."

An immense amount of iron lies buried in the mountains of the west coast. Not much has ever been done about it. But enormous quantities of ore have been destroyed by the processes of war, and South American iron may come to high values sooner than its owners have supposed.

It is only recently that consideration has been given to the idea of establishing in connection with the Canal a great commercial trans-shiping point. Colon is yet a little town, mostly West Indian to-day, but already the Cristobal

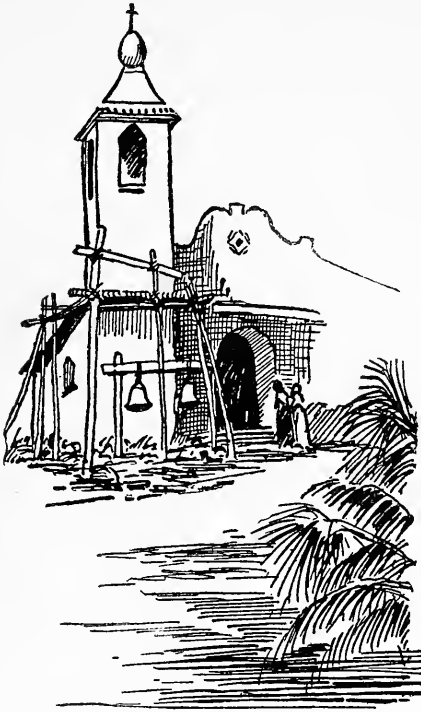
docks are piled high with South American products awaiting reshipment. The proposed establishment of a free port at Colon may yet result in a western Hongkong where the commerce of the seven seas comes together to be distributed to the five continents. Whatever might have been the results had there been no war, it is now sure that everything that happens in South America has henceforth a very definite significance for the United States. Whether we like it or not, we are out of our exclusive dooryard and will have to take our place on the great national street named America and play the game with our neighbors.

For decades past Central America has been an unknown land to the United States. We have contentedly supposed that the only crop was that of revolutions and the only resources a few jungle fruits. But at last we are discovering Central America, and some of us are astonished to there find vast areas, fertile soils, varied and valuable products, intelligent peoples, a volume of commerce and climate fit for Eden. We knew little and cared less about Guatemala, Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama; and since the bulk of trade of these lands was with Europe, they paid little attention to us. Why should they do otherwise?

The presence of the United States on the Isthmus of Panama introduces a new factor into the American tropics. It looks very small and

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insignificant, that little ten-mile strip with the influence in Panamanian affairs, but how far the North American influence is going to reach out beyond the Zone limits cannot be known. Everybody is watching the results for revolution-proof,



A JUNGLE CATHEDRAL

permanently peaceful Panama, and there are other countries not far away where there are people who are praying for something like it, or just-as-good, for themselves. Doubtless their prayers will not be answered directly but the influence of this heaven may work out into a wide circle and instigate movements that we have not counted upon.

But the largest factor in the new American situation grows out of the new world-emphasis on the Golden Rule. At last the world understands as never before how finally determinative is the moral and spiritual factor in all human progress. We may never know just how much the world had paid to clear away the rubbish of autocracy and found the new age on the principle

of a square deal for great and small; but the deed is done, and henceforth the one compelling sanction in all life must be the essential principle for which the Allies have spent their treasure and spilled their blood. The new internationalism will underlie all further development of relations between the two Americas, which opens a new world of social discovery and growth as fascinating as that which Columbus found in the physical surface of the globe.

The greater results of the closer fellowship of North and South America will be registered in the realms of mind and spirit. Trade balances and stock dividends there will be, but back of and beyond these will rise the new American spirit, uniting the finest courtesy and artistic temperament of the Latin with the practical initiative and efficient vigor of the blend of blood in the United States. There is no gulf, great or small, fixed between the two races. Each has something that the other needs, and close fellowship will result in new race sympathy and mutual advantage.

To ignore this basis of development is to forget that cold commercialism will in time chill the fervor of friendships and alienate the growing sympathy of nations. If we are to have no interest in our neighbors other than the profits we may make from their trade, we will soon cease to be friends and become bitter rivals at the big game of getting all we can.

It takes two to play the game of reciprocal commercial success. If we succeed on the great international chess board, it will be not by shrewd defeat of our friends but by the coming to maturity of a high sense of honor and fair play on both sides. It is not one of us against the other, but both of us together against the normal difficulties of growth and production.

One of the native leaders of Latin-American life has explained that South America was unfortunate in the character of the founders of her national institutions. Adventurers, explorers for gain, greedy conquistadores made the beginnings here, and the moral foundations were laid by religious leaders who traveled with pirates and plunderers and officially blessed their every act of crime. And from the beginning until now the type of religion that has prevailed in Latin-America has not assisted in the building up of free institutions, nor has it produced a high morality among the people.

The South American struggle for self-government and free ideals has been a long, bloody, and heroic grapple with the reactionary and despotic forces brought over from mediæval Europe. Men like San Martin and Bolivar deserve high honor for their work in breaking the bondage that held all life helpless. One by one the colonies threw off their political yokes and became republics, every one of them, in theory, modeled after

the United States. The passion of the South American patriot has been home-rule, but, unfortunately, home-rule has not always meant self-government. That is quite a different matter. The overthrow of European despotisms was followed by innumerable internal revolutions. Panama had no monopoly on internal dissensions, and makes no claim that her fifty-three revolutions in fifty-seven years is the high-water mark of insurrections for South or Central America.

In short, the mere overthrow of a despotic government does not assure stable political institutions nor efficient administration of public affairs. Good government by popular sovereignty is something far more fundamental than a matter of printed constitutions or shouting "Viva independencia!" in the plazas. Without moral responsibility and free consciences there can never be a successful democracy on earth.

Free institutions and free consciences are winning out in South America, but it is in spite of the established church and not because of it. It is not politically a question of religion that we are discussing; it is a matter of organized, crafty, and unscrupulous opposition to every movement that makes for the development of democracy in South America. And since the establishment of a better understanding and closer fellowship between the two continents depends upon this very basis of free and morally responsible social and

political leaders, the question is most vital. Everywhere there are a few intelligent, earnest men working away patiently and steadily at the problem of making South America democratic by making her people free to adopt with intelligence democratic institutions. One by one the nations have declared for freedom of worship and conscience, and, last of all, Peru, robbed and despoiled Peru of the conquest, priest-ridden and fanatical Peru, threw off the galling yoke of spiritual bondage and divorced church and state. It seems simple enough to read about it here, but at every step of the way the old church left unturned no stone of bigotry and intrigue and prejudice that could oppose the coming of the modern age to Peru.

The supreme tragedy of South American life has been that the light that has been in her has been darkness. The spiritual leaders of the people have themselves opposed all progress toward the light. Until a spiritual leadership arises that will at least support aggressive and progressive movements toward freedom and democracy and moral uplift, slow progress will be made. And this matter concerns the whole American world. These are now our next-door neighbors, and their children will yet be playing in our yard.

The surprising thing is that so much has already been accomplished with a millstone tied

about the neck of all progressive movements. No finer tribute could be paid to the high ideals and large possibilities of South American character than a recital of the results accomplished by her intellectual and moral leaders in the face of enormous handicaps.

The thinking minds of these southern republics are almost without a religion to-day. Long since have they ceased to give even passive assent to the demands of the commercial hierarchy that claims spiritual monopoly over the souls of man. Technical outward conformity to the requirements of the church may be a political advantage or a domestic convenience, but as a principle of life and foundation for thought the intellectuals are frankly agnostic. Man after man, when once confidence is gained, will state that they do not believe in the claims of the church, and usually have ceased to believe in anything at all—and these are the leaders of the intellectual life of the nations with which we are to deal. And what are they to do? No adequate substitute do they know, and until an open Bible and a living Christ take the place of the mummery and the crucifix we cannot denounce their course. Their intellectual nonconformity is to their credit.

The final problem is that of developing people fit to live with, not mental and moral slaves under the dominance of superstition and intolerance. Back of the cry for wider and richer trade routes

is the need of responsible men with whom we may transact business. More than shorter shipping line, we need better shippers, north and south. Underneath vast projects of material advance-



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ment lie all the social and industrial problems of labor and wages and exchange and credits and fidelity to contracts and personal honor. And above all this is the need of honesty and efficiency and a personal faith in a living God who knows and cares and takes account of what we do, of what we are, and is not to be bought off by a check or an incantation.

What the bigger American world needs is bigger and better Americans, Latin and Saxon. If the influences released by the Panama Canal help to produce these citizens of the

larger horizon, one of the greatest services possible will be rendered to humanity. But the larger horizon is conditioned upon a larger hope that flows from the mountain of the more abundant life. And the Americans of the northland need

the broader basis and vision and character as much as their southern neighbors.

What really has the Panama Canal to do with all this? Much every way, but chiefly as a key for the unlocking of the long-closed doors and the releasing of long-latent forces of international relations in trade and in social and spiritual life. Should a great working example of educational and social and spiritual life be established at Panama by some concerted action of united Protestantism, the influence of the principles there promulgated by progressive and devout men would extend over a very wide range of Latin life. The procession that now passes through Panama will be doubled and trebled in the coming decades, and what is planted here will spread everywhere. "I saw it so done in Panama," may become the precedent for almost anything new, whether good or bad.

The influence of such institutions in the City of Panama will be more far-reaching than if located on the Canal Zone. The Zone is wholly North American; Panama is thoroughly Latin. The institutions of the Zone are those of the United States and are looked on somewhat askance by Latin visitors. It is all very great and imposing, but it is so radically different in spirit and method, that points of close contact are hard to establish. Panama is a different matter. Whatever is done there by Spanish-speaking people

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will be visited and viewed with sympathetic interest and appreciation.

The heart of living faith that is to impress its throb on this blood stream of Latin life must not be an imported made-in-the-States institution, or it will be but an ineffectual flutter. Likewise it must be something more comprehensive than the traditional schedule of occasional gatherings of the faithful, important as these will be. To do this work there needs be an interpretation of the Christian message that will relate itself to a very wide circle of human life and interests. Through native leadership and examples must be spoken a message that will compel attention and challenge the minds as well as the hearts of men. A living interpretation of a spiritual passion, a social service program with a heart in it, an educational work that will not only teach the curriculum but develop moral character, and intellectual propaganda of good literature, a physical gospel of health and exercise, a recreational life clean and wholesome, a personal moral standard of the New Testament grade—these are what are needed in Panama and, broadly speaking, everywhere else in Latin-America. Once established here they will be felt over a wide reach of the southern world.

There is a lot of cheap and easy optimism that maintains that all will yet be well in some indefinite way. Some hopeful tourists have visited

Panama and taken the trip about South America, apparently seeing nothing but the rainbow of promise everywhere. And these happy pilgrims have written books, assuring us with a maximum of glittering generalities that right is everywhere driving out wrong and that all will soon be well. Other writers assume this attitude consciously, out of regard for the interests that pay their expenses on the trip. Some people write in glowing terms from motives of consideration for the feelings of their South American friends. Would that we might tell only the bright sight of the story! It would be far more pleasant.

But, after all, the facts are the irreducible minimum upon which to build all successful programs of reconstruction. Only when we reach the inner and deeper springs of life and character can we hope to open fountains of living waters for the desert of the human heart in bondage. Really to know Latin-America is to believe in its high and fine possibilities. What Latin-America needs is a fair chance.

The end of the last great despotism of earth has left democracy a triumphant political principle in human government. Henceforth no nation may hope to keep step with the advance of mankind unless its political procedures are essentially democratic. And while South America has long had the form of democracy, it now becomes essential that her republics develop the

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working reality of effective self-government. To do this two things are indispensable. The successful democracy must be intelligent and must find a moral foundation in the free consciences and minds of self-disciplined citizens. Spiritual despotisms and religious superstitions never did and never will eventuate in a capacity for democracy. Only men who are intelligently free can exercise the functions of free governments.

The only working basis of democracy, in short, is that system of religious ideals which has uniformly supported popular education, championed the rights of the oppressed, advocated self-government, welcomed investigation, and maintained freedom of conscience as of higher value than iron-bound uniformity to prescribed standards. It requires but a cursory glance at the record of history to know that no working democracy has ever survived the opposition of an ecclesiastical hierarchy that has remained the bitter foe of progress for a thousand years.

There is more hope for Panama in the little Protestant chapel down by the Malecon and the efficient and modern school maintained there by the force of missionaries with their progressive ideals than in all the pageantry and glitter of a system of repression and despotism that the world is rapidly outgrowing. The religious Hun will take his place with the deposed political despot who proposed to destroy the liberties of man-

kind. The most urgent need of the mission work in Panama just now is that of trained and efficient Latin leadership. No people can be effectively lifted from without.

A century ago nearly the whole of the southern world was in the throes of political readjustment. Self-government and political freedom were the watchwords and everywhere strong men arose and devoted their lives to the task of breaking from the necks of the people the political yokes under which they had staggered for two and one half centuries.

To-day in Latin-America the second great struggle for freedom is under way. Bound minds and consciences, superstitions and moral despotisms—these are the stumbling-stones across the pathway of progress. All over Latin-America men are rising and enlisting their hearts and minds in the struggle for free consciences and independent judgment in the things of the Spirit. Nearly all these countries achieved political independence within a few years. When the climax came it was comparatively sudden, and it may be that the breaking of the chains of moral and spiritual despotisms will likewise be a shorter struggle than now seems possible. Once again the clock is striking, and who knows but the end of political despotism in all the earth may mark the rapid approach of spiritual democracy and highest liberty in all America!

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Heroic has been the long struggle in Latin-America for self-government. Splendid is the fight being made to-day for larger liberty. If Pan-Americanism means anything at all, it means a social foundation in honor and intelligence and brotherhood. It is time to address ourselves to the great unfinished task begun by those intrepid pioneers. The Canal is finished and the task of construction is done, but the end of construction is the beginning of empire-building for the larger task yet incomplete.

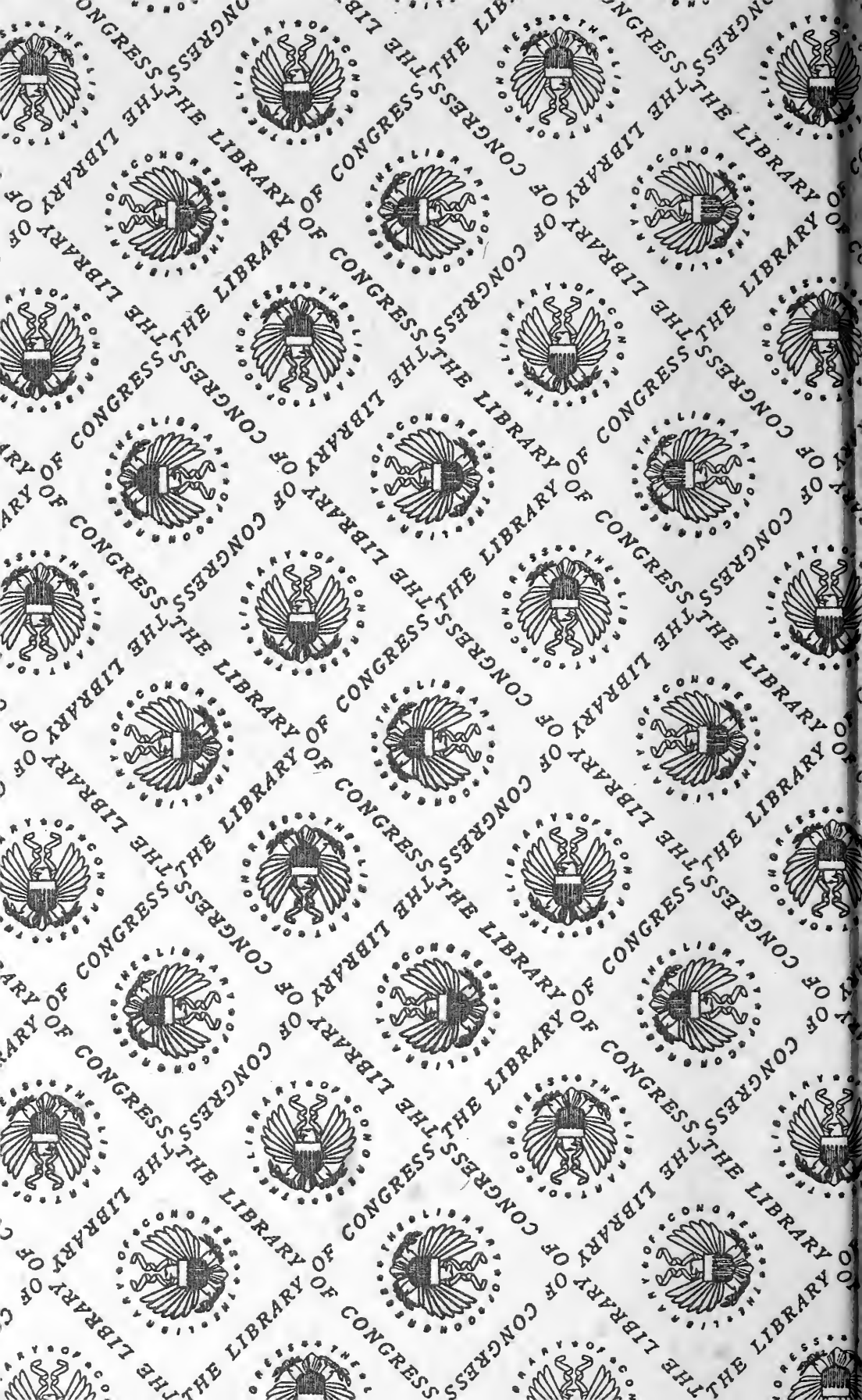


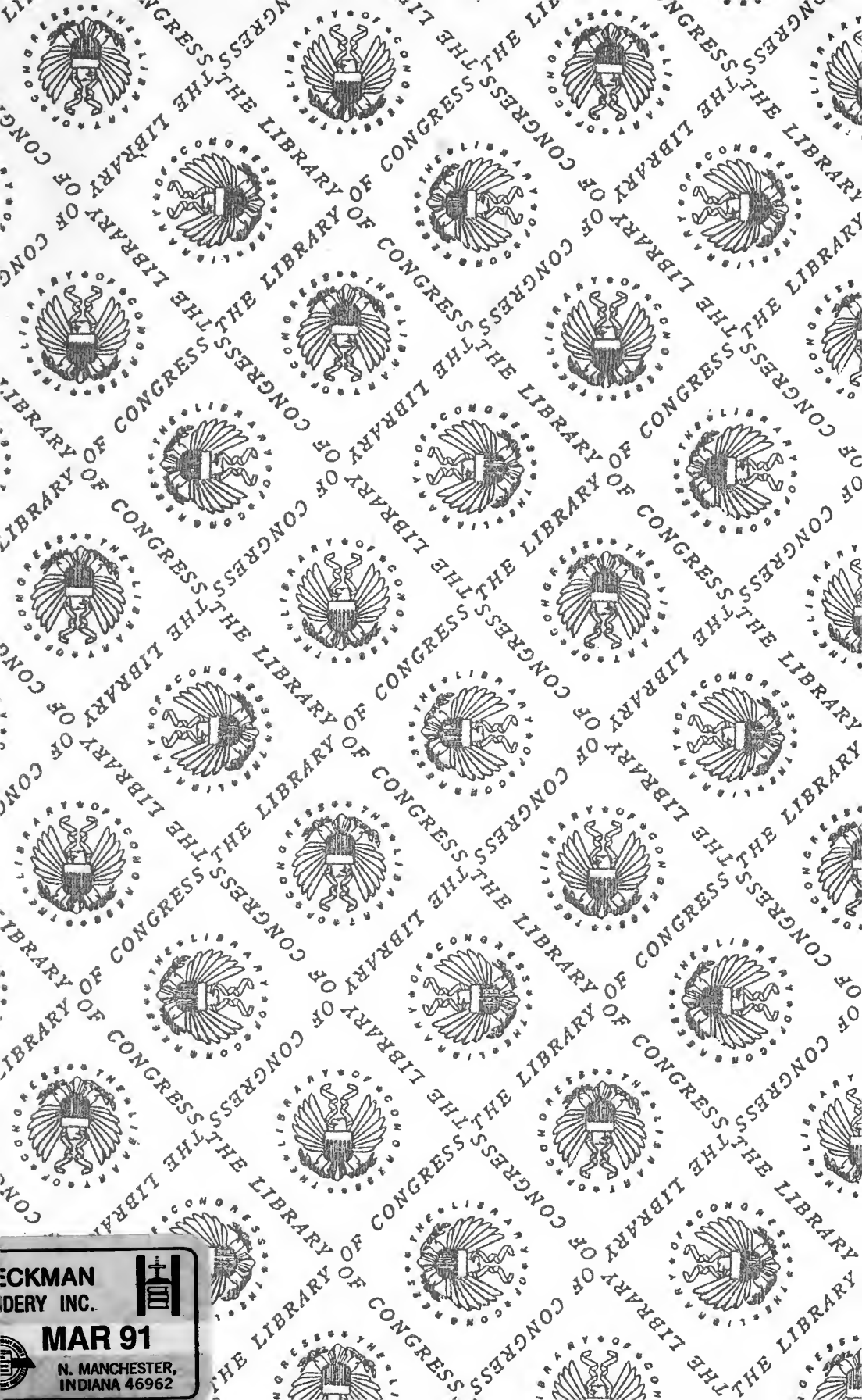
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